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Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract <p>This thesis studies the political process in Pakistan between 1988 and 1999. The aim of the study is to explain why the transition to democracy failed during this period. Three major problems have been singled out for this purpose: the ethnic structure, the political structure and the role of the military. The thesis also shows how similar problems have appeared throughout Pakistan's history and for this reason the obstacles to democracy are described as long-term, structural problems. Pakistan's role as a frontline state in global anti-terrorist efforts has prompted a need for fresh perspectives on the country's political development. Previous research on Pakistan is characterized as lacking historical understanding. Therefore this thesis attempts to provide a historical dimension by tracing the roots of Pakistan's political problems.</p> <p>The primary sources for the thesis consist of autobiographical material, speeches, interviews and party manifestos, but the argumentation relies heavily on secondary sources. The theoretical sections of the thesis consult e.g. Dahl, Linz and Stepan for definitions of democracy and democratic transitions, Huntington for the concept of political institutionalisation and Koonings & Kruijt for approaches to political armies.</p> <p>The main result of the thesis is that although Pakistan began a democratic transition in 1988, it was never completed and the political process was rather more like a "nontransition". Above all, the transition was severely constrained from the outset. The greatest obstacle to democratization was arguably the Pakistani military's consistent interference in politics through a constitutional amendment enacted during military rule in 1985. Moreover, the lack of commitment to democratic values among the political elite puts into question whether there was a movement towards democracy at all during this period. The inability or unwillingness of successive governments to address the ethnic and regional cleavages in Pakistani society as political issues rather than law and order issues also served to undermine the legitimacy of the entire political system.</p> <p>The thesis concludes that the same problems seem to have halted democratic initiatives in Pakistan since the country became independent in 1947; it therefore seems likely that they will also persist unless the underlying issues are specifically addressed.</p>		
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A STATE OF TRANSITION

Structural problems and Pakistan's failed transition to
democracy 1988–1999

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1. Introduction

The political history of Pakistan offers several instances of *déjà vu*. When Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan from exile in 1986, she was greeted by enormous crowds as a symbol of change after many years under military rule. Bhutto then went on to lead her Pakistan People's Party to victory in the first free elections for 11 years and become the first woman ever to lead a Muslim country; her leadership was met with great optimism and often interpreted in terms of a global trend towards democratisation. When Bhutto returned to the country in 2007, after a decade in exile, the circumstances were similar: she was welcomed by huge crowds that had grown weary of prolonged military rule. Bhutto's intention was to lead her party into the elections scheduled for early 2008 in which she was certain to secure a prominent place in Pakistani politics again.

Yet although Pakistani history may seem to move in circles, it is still utterly unpredictable. A few weeks before the elections Bhutto was assassinated at a political rally, incidentally in the same park where the country's first Prime Minister was shot to death in 1951. The assassination of Bhutto was indicative of the political culture of violence that permeates Pakistan and that had already claimed the lives of her two brothers as well as her father, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Above all, the assassination of Bhutto was a sad reminder of the failure of Pakistan's experiment with democracy during the 1990s, to which Bhutto herself was partly at fault.

The principal aim of this thesis is to address the question of why Pakistan's transition to democracy between 1988 and 1999 failed. I seek the answer to this question in structural problems and have chosen to focus on three issues that I consider the most important reasons for the distortion of the democratic process in Pakistan: the ethnic structure, the political structure and the role of the military. By terming these problems "structural" I imply that they are fundamental, long-term issues that have their roots as far back as in the colonial era. Therefore, although the focus of this thesis lies on the mentioned period I will also account for how similar obstacles to democracy have appeared and reappeared during the course of Pakistan's history. The underlying implication is that these problems

are likely to persist unless specifically addressed. The historical theory of the past decades has of course debated to which extent one can prove continuity and causal relationships between events decades apart and it is not the view of this thesis that the past dictates a certain outcome. One of my arguments is, however, that the democratic experiment in Pakistan between 1988 and 1999 was not a “new beginning”, but severely constrained from the outset by the legacies of the near, and perhaps even distant, past.

1.1 Contexts

Why, then, is the democratic process in Pakistan interesting and important to understand? Pakistan’s geostrategic location and historically close relations to Afghanistan has recently made it a frontline state in global anti-terrorism efforts. Pakistan itself has been identified as a breeding ground for international terrorists, which has also prompted the US government to adopt a new focus on the country.¹ That the failure of Pakistan’s democratic transition and the resulting political instability has made significant contributions to making the country a safe haven for terrorists is beyond doubt. Another reason that the 1990s are important to understand is that in 2008 the democratic process in Pakistan seemed to pick up where it ended with the 1999 military coup: the main parties are the same and so are the central political figures, with the obvious exception of Benazir Bhutto. There is, in other words, clearly a strategic need for new perspectives and information on the political process in Pakistan. Ian Talbot has identified a number of problems with previous research on the country: Pakistan has been studied above all by political scientists, which has prompted Talbot (himself a historian) to describe many of the current theories as lacking sufficient historical contextualisation. He also specifically argues that the lack of historical understanding weakens explanations of the post-1988 democratisation in Pakistan. Historical analysis, he argues, is necessary here since political actors in a transition situation are likely to be influenced by the legacies of the past.²

¹ “Obama breaks with Bush Afghan policy”, *BBC News*, 27.3.2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7969071.stm>. (accessed April 21st, 2010); “Pact targets Pakistan terror link”, *BBC News*, 14.12.2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7782125.stm. (accessed April 21st, 2010).

² Talbot, Ian. *Pakistan: A Modern History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005: 10-12.

Studying the democratic process in Pakistan also sheds important light on democratisation and democratic transitions in general and contributes to the discussion regarding the compatibility of Islam and democracy. With its population of 170 million, Pakistan is the sixth most populous country and has the second largest Muslim population in the world. Akbar Ahmed, among others, has argued that Pakistan is considered a leader in the Muslim world and therefore has the potential of spreading the seeds of democracy.³ As heir to the British Indian Empire, Pakistan can be seen as having the benefit of early exposure to modern democratic institutions – exposure that the Muslim countries of West Asia often lack. Because of this Pakistan's failure to democratise is often seen as remarkable in juxtaposition with India's evolution into the "world's largest democracy". Ayesha Jalal has however refuted the simple dichotomy between "democratic India" and "authoritarian Pakistan" and argued that the political systems that emerged in the Indian subcontinent after 1947 were in fact more mixed than is commonly acknowledged.⁴ Yet the fact remains that democracy has encountered greater obstacles in Pakistan and this disparity is still improperly accounted for. According to Haynes there has also been relatively little discussion on why the deepening of democracy has failed after regime changes in the Third World. Here too, sufficient attention has not been paid to the historical dimension.⁵ Wagner similarly laments the underrepresentation of South Asia in debates on democratisation and consolidation, where most examples seem to be derived from Latin America or South and Central Europe.⁶

1.2 Structure

This thesis is divided into four main chapters. Chapter 2 attempts to define the concepts *democracy* and *democratic transition* and presents some underlying factors that influence the democratic process. In chapter 3 I will trace the evolution of ethnic relations in Pakistan's history. Chapter 4 introduces the concept of *institutionalisation* and discusses

³ Houtman, Gustaaf. "A conversation with Akbar Ahmed." *Anthropology Today* 24.1 (2008): 5.

⁴ See in particular Jalal, Ayesha. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective (Contemporary South Asia)*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

⁵ Haynes, Jeffrey. *Democracy and Civil Society in the Third World: Politics and New Political Movements*. London: Polity Press, 1998: 171-172.

⁶ Wagner, Christian. "Democracy and state in South Asia: Between fragmentation and consolidation?" *Asian Survey* 39.6 (1999): 909.

the political structure in Pakistan with a focus on parties and the party system. Chapter 5 considers the political role of the Pakistani military after presenting some general observations on army intervention in politics.

There are of course other factors that have contributed to the failure of the democratic transition in Pakistan. Economic problems, for instance, are not insignificant but fall beyond the scope of this thesis above all because I consider them a function of the more fundamental issues discussed here. It is also common to bring up religion when discussing the political trajectory of Pakistan, ostensibly because the country's Islamic identity is seen as being at odds with democracy. Certainly, successive regimes have stressed religion in attempts to bridge ethnic divisions, yet Pakistan has never become an Islamic state like Saudi Arabia or Iran.⁷ Nor was it ever intended to be that, since the creation of Pakistan was justified not by religion as such, but rather by a supposedly common South Asian Muslim culture. Thus Islam, Rose argues, "has been a negligible factor in Pakistani politics since 1947, neither contributing to nor seriously obstructing the establishment of democratic institutions and systems to any significant extent".⁸ During the period 1988-1999, for instance, it is noteworthy that Islamic parties received very little support in elections.⁹ Therefore the reasons for omitting religious considerations here are analytical as this thesis seeks the causes of Pakistan's failure to democratise elsewhere.

1.3 Sources and previous research

Primary sources were largely unavailable for the purposes of this thesis and consequently, I have relied heavily on secondary sources. I do however make some use of party manifestos, interviews, speeches and autobiographical material.

⁷ Jaffrelot, Christophe. "Islamic identity and ethnic tensions" in Jaffrelot, Christophe (ed.). *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins (Anthem South Asian Studies)*. New York: Anthem Press, 2002: 9.

⁸ Rose, Leo E. "Pakistan: Experiments with democracy" in Diamond, Larry; Linz, Juan and Lipset Seymour Martin (eds.). *Democracy in Developing Countries: Asia*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989: 131.

⁹ Talbot 2005: 357.

Some of the problems concerning previous research on Pakistan have already been mentioned above. Pakistan remains a fairly unknown and unstudied country, especially in comparison with India. Scholarly interest for Pakistan seems to vary with the strategic importance of the country; thus the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the US has generated some fresh studies on Pakistan that however remain on a rather superficial level and seem to cater above all for the immediate needs of American policymakers. Cohen's *The Idea of Pakistan* is a case in point and typically ends in a chapter called "American options".¹⁰

The most laudable general books on Pakistan are those by Jaffrelot and Talbot.¹¹ In particular Talbot's work goes far beyond the scope of a general history and is a both theoretically sound and exhaustive presentation. Like Talbot, Ayesha Jalal stresses the importance of colonial legacies for subsequent political developments and her work is an essential source although it is not focused on Pakistan alone.¹² Talbot's and Jalal's theories come closest to my line of analysis although their findings are embedded in books that cover much larger subjects than this thesis and that were published before Pakistan relapsed into military rule in 1999.¹³

Apart from these general works, I have also found the academic journal *Asian Survey* a very valuable source. *Asian Survey* has published insightful thematic articles on Pakistan, often by Pakistani-American political scientists. Above all, the journal's annual reviews with detailed descriptions of central political and economic developments in Pakistan in the preceding year have been very helpful given the unavailability of newspaper material from the period under study.

In order to structure my arguments I have also consulted some theoretical works. For the discussion on democracy and democratic transitions I rely above all on the authoritative

¹⁰ Cohen, Stephen P. *The Idea of Pakistan*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006.

¹¹ Jaffrelot 2002; Talbot 2005.

¹² Jalal 1995; Bose, Sugata & Jalal, Ayesha. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

¹³ The first edition of Talbot's history of Pakistan is from 1998.

theories of Dahl, Diamond, Linz and Lipset.¹⁴ The presentation of political institutionalisation is based on the work of Huntington and Randall and Svåsand.¹⁵ In the chapter on the role of the military my starting point has been Kooning's and Kruijt's study on political armies.¹⁶

On the whole I consider the material used in this thesis to be sufficient for the purpose of my main arguments.

¹⁴ Dahl, Robert A. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998; Diamond, Larry; Linz, Juan J. and Lipset, Seymour Martin. *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences With Democracy*. Boulder & London: L. Rienner Publishers, 1995.

¹⁵ Huntington, Samuel P. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968; Randall, Vicky and Svåsand, Lars, "Party institutionalisation and the new democracies" in Haynes, Jeff (ed.). *Democracy and Political Change in the Third World*. New York: Routledge, 2001: 77-90.

¹⁶ Koonings, Kirk and Kruijt, Dirk. *Political Armies: The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy*. London: Zed Books, 2002.

2. Democracy – a conceptual and theoretical overview

In order to be able to assess the reasons for the failure of the democratic process in Pakistan during the period in question it is necessary to first define *democracy*, *democratic transition* and *democratic consolidation*. To begin with it is important to take a safe distance from teleological approaches to democracy; the purpose of this thesis is not to impose the concept of democracy on the political process in Pakistan or to imply that movement towards democracy is inevitable. The starting point is rather the demands for democracy that were voiced in Pakistan in particular after 1986 and the frequent use of democratic themes in the political debate. Benazir Bhutto and her Pakistan People's Party were especially eager to portray themselves as champions of democracy and to justify their policies, demands and accusations by referring to the democratic cause. In her 1988 autobiography, for instance, Bhutto writes: "As we approach the watershed of the November elections, Pakistan is at the crossroads of democracy and continued dictatorship. The people of Pakistan are crying out for self-determination. Their voice is the Pakistan People's Party".¹ In other words there was an assumption, both within and outside the country, that a movement towards democracy was in progress. As for the reality of such a movement and of the commitment to democratic values among the political elite, that is an issue I will return to in the conclusion.

2.1 What is democracy?

As Dahl states, *democracy* refers to both an ideal and an actuality.² He summarizes the vast literature on democracy by presenting five common criteria for ideal democracy. *Effective participation* means that all members of an organisation have equal opportunities to express their views on policy to other members. *Voting equality* implies that all members have equal opportunities to vote and that all votes are considered equal. *Enlightened understanding* requires that each member has equal opportunities to learn about policy alternatives and their outcomes. *Control of the agenda* means that members are able to choose what matters are placed on the agenda. *Inclusion of adults* means that

¹ Bhutto, Benazir. *Daughter of the East*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988: 322.

² Dahl, Robert A. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998: 26.

all adults have the rights implied in the first four criteria.³ However, democracy on a large scale is hardly possible without delegating decisions to representatives and actual democracy therefore has slightly different requirements. In order to approach the ideals listed above a large-scale democracy must fulfil six minimal conditions: *elected officials*; *free, fair and frequent elections*; *freedom of expression*; *alternative sources of information*; *associational autonomy* and *inclusive citizenship*. According to Dahl, all these six elements exist in countries that are widely considered democratic today.⁴ The presence of these attributes does not however mean that democracy in a country is finalised – there is always scope for more democracy. There are also a number of underlying factors that have a great influence on the function and development of democracy and it is worthwhile to examine these in some detail below.

2.2 Underlying factors that influence democracy

The nature of the *political culture* in a country is crucial for the function of democracy. Democratic stability requires that a majority of those governed consider the democratic system legitimate, as the best form of government despite its shortcomings and thereby acknowledge the regime's moral entitlement to demand obedience. This assumption should also be shared by the military and the opposition.⁵ Linz lists a number of characteristics that signify a loyal opposition, most importantly that it is committed to achieve power only by electoral means, i.e. that it rejects violence or unconstitutional appeals to the military as a way to gain power.⁶ Legitimacy is moreover linked to performance; a regime that is able to provide what people want usually has a more deeply rooted legitimacy. A common problem in the developing world is indeed that democratic regimes often face both low legitimacy and low effectiveness from the outset. Yet the linkage between a democratic government's economic performance and likelihood of survival should not be exaggerated, for a society committed to democracy can overcome an economic crisis without experiencing a political crisis. Another issue related to political culture and legitimacy is corruption. Widespread corruption can result in the

³ Dahl 1998: 37-38.

⁴ Ibid.: 85-86, 91.

⁵ Linz, Juan J. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, breakdown & reequilibration*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978: 16-17.

⁶ Ibid.: 36-37.

entire political system losing its legitimacy. This is possible in particular if the economy is not sufficiently autonomous from the state, whereby accumulation of personal wealth is dependent on access to or control of the state. In this case the pursuit of political power can become so important that the political process, rather than focusing on debating policies, is reduced to power struggles where the rules of democratic competition are not abided by.⁷ Dahl argues that a history of democratic commitment is ideal, that the support from political culture is most reliable “when these beliefs and predispositions are embedded in the country’s culture and are transmitted, in large part, from one generation to the next.”⁸ On the other hand it is obvious that cultural patterns and beliefs are not static, that they change in response to new experiences and that a democratic political culture can therefore both appear and disappear, regardless of its prevalence in the past.⁹

The nature of *political leadership* is another crucial factor for a working democracy. Circumstances that are constraining and unfavourable to the democratic process require political leaders that are skilful and committed if democracy is to survive. The erosion of democratic institutions has often been accelerated by leaders who are inefficacious and weak, but likewise by politicians who are authoritarian and “consumed with their own self-aggrandizement”.¹⁰ Leaders should ideally exhibit the same characteristics as the loyal opposition mentioned above.

One of the strongest influences on the stability of democracy is the level of *socioeconomic development*, according to Diamond, Linz and Lipset.¹¹ They argue that at least higher levels of development imply a significantly higher likelihood of stable democracy, especially if development is measured in terms of the level of poverty, literacy and life expectancy. There are a number of reasons for this correlation: high levels of development reduce socioeconomic inequality, thereby minimising feelings of deprivation and injustice which fuel extremist politics. Literacy and education support the

⁷ Diamond, Larry, Linz, Juan J. and Lipset, Seymour Martin. “Introduction: What makes for democracy?” in Diamond, Larry, Juan J. Linz, and Lipset, Seymour Martin (eds.). *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences With Democracy*. Boulder & London: L. Rienner Publishers, 1995: 9-11, 31-32.

⁸ Dahl 1998: 157.

⁹ Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995: 21.

¹⁰ Ibid.: 16.

¹¹ Ibid.: 21.

evolution of an informed citizenry that can participate in politics on its own terms and demand accountability and responsiveness from the regime. Development also tends to widen the middle class, which is often, though not unconditionally, associated with a deepening of the democratic political culture. Moreover, economic development frequently enlarges and empowers civil society, which will be discussed in more detail below.¹² In his seminal essay on the “Third Wave”, Huntington goes as far as saying that “in poor countries democratization is unlikely; in rich countries it usually has already occurred” and that poverty is probably the principal obstacle to democratic development.¹³ Yet it is clear that the correlation between national wealth and democracy is not as simple – India is often cited as an example of an underdeveloped, yet relatively democratic country. On the other hand, the negative impact deep social inequalities have on democracy is evident for instance from several of the oil-producing states in West Asia that can certainly be labelled wealthy in absolute terms, but hardly democratic. Reduction of inequalities through e.g. land reforms is therefore beneficial to democracy, but quite naturally very difficult to bring about politically.¹⁴

An active and relatively autonomous *civil society* is commonly considered important for the development of democracy. Diamond defines civil society as “the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.”¹⁵ Civil society relates to the state in some way, but unlike political society does not normally seek to win control over it.¹⁶ Civil society reinforces the democratic process in a number of ways. The foremost function is to limit and monitor the exercise of state power. Civil society also has an educational function as it stimulates participation and thereby increases citizens’ political skills and helps to disseminate a democratic political culture; because of this it trains many future political leaders. Civil society can moreover enhance the representativeness of democracy by giving a voice to groups that are

¹² Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995: 22-23.

¹³ Huntington, Samuel P. "Democracy's Third Wave." *Journal of Democracy* 2.2 (1991): 31.

¹⁴ Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995: 25.

¹⁵ Diamond, Larry. "Rethinking civil society: Toward democratic consolidation." *Journal of Democracy* 5.3 (1994): 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 6.

marginalised in political society. Very important is also the formation of issue-oriented movements that encourage citizens to transcend historic divisions along regional, religious or ethnic lines. By increasing the accountability, responsiveness and inclusiveness of the political system, civil society ultimately also strengthens its legitimacy.¹⁷ Diamond however postulates that civil society should as a rule respect state authority since it is possible for a confrontational and aggressive civil society to overwhelm a weak state and undermine the democratic process. Civil organisations should likewise not seek to replace political parties since they cannot provide the same enduring coherence and popular support required to sustain governments and pass legislation.¹⁸

The nature of the *political institutions*¹⁹ is decisive for the persistence of democracy in a country. Strong institutions structure behaviour into recurrent and predictable patterns, thereby encouraging moderation, bargaining and trust among political actors. A polity with coherent and effective institutions is also more likely to perform well in terms of securing the rule of law and economic development.²⁰ It is widely accepted that parties and party systems are central political institutions and although the demise of political parties has been predicted for some time, they still remain indispensable especially when the process of democratic transition and consolidation has begun, for reasons mentioned above.²¹ The choice of electoral system is also an important issue and it appears clear that this choice should take into account the circumstances and historical patterns of cleavage in each country.²² In a multi-ethnic society like Pakistan, both proportional and majority systems have their advantages and disadvantages. The former can accommodate the various interests better, but the risk is that it produces a fragmented, weak and inefficient party system. The latter can encourage parties to seek broad political appeal and thereby

¹⁷ Diamond 1994: 7-11.

¹⁸ Ibid.: 15.

¹⁹ The concept of *institutionalisation* is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

²⁰ Ibid.: 33.

²¹ Randall, Vicky and Svåsand, Lars, "Party institutionalisation and the new democracies" in Haynes, Jeff (ed.). *Democracy and Political Change in the 'Third World'*. New York: Routledge, 2001: 75-76.

²² Gladdish, Ken. "Choosing an electoral system: The primacy of the particular." *Journal of Democracy* 4.1 (1993): 55.

produce moderation and accommodation, but if a resulting two-party cleavage coincides with for instance ethnic cleavages it can polarise conflict and undermine democracy.²³

The constitutional structure is another part of the vital political institutions. Diamond, Linz and Lipset argue that the presidential system has many characteristic problems in the developing world. The president is often too strong, which can lead to abuse of power and even coups against democracy. Another potential problem is a struggle for power and legitimacy between the president and the legislature, which paralyses the function of the entire political system. In new and fragile democracies, both these scenarios can have dire consequences.²⁴ A strong and independent judiciary is also a crucial political institution, as it is the ultimate guardian of the rule of law and the accountability of the rulers to the ruled.²⁵

In a country characterised by *ethnic and regional conflict*, democracy faces significant obstacles. According to Diamond, Linz and Lipset, ethnicity defined as a highly inclusive and distinctive group identity based on culture and common origin is the most difficult type of cleavage to manage for a democracy.²⁶ Indeed Dahl goes as far as saying that “democratic political institutions are more likely to develop and endure in a country that is culturally fairly homogenous [...]” since a subculture with tight boundaries may become “a country within a country, a nation within a nation”.²⁷ The political demands of ethnic groups are often matters of principle and linked with issues of identity, religious conviction and group survival. Such demands are therefore nonnegotiable, causing friction with the democratic process that normally requires readiness for negotiation and compromise.²⁸ In a society deeply divided by ethnicity, inclusion and exclusion from power and resources is difficult to transcend; elections function more like a census and produce a deadlock if for instance one ethnic group dominates because of its demographic force. Ethnic cleavages also frequently coincide with social inequalities so

²³ Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995: 34-35.

²⁴ Ibid.: 39.

²⁵ Ibid.: 41.

²⁶ Ibid.: 42.

²⁷ Dahl 1998: 149.

²⁸ Ibid.: 150.

that some ethnic groups are richer, better educated and disproportionately represented in industry, commerce, the military or the bureaucracy. Another serious problem is that ethnic strife can lead to disagreements regarding the boundaries and membership of the state itself.²⁹ In order to manage ethnic conflict, devolution of power through for instance federalism is often necessary because centralisation of state power typically feeds ethnic and regional disparities. Devolution of power at the local level also contributes to democratic consolidation as it removes barriers to participation, enhances the responsiveness and accountability of government and gives opposition and minority groups a voice.³⁰

A final influence on the function of democracy is the potential political role of the *military*. Dahl considers civilian control over the military and police an essential condition for democracy.³¹ Civilian control involves constraining the military to the core national security functions while also reducing military influence over non-military issues and eliminating the military's ownership or control over non-military institutions. Even on issues directly related to the military and national security, decision-making should ideally be scrutinised by civilians.³² Political armies are discussed at greater length in chapter 5 below.

2.3 Democratic transition and consolidation

The factors mentioned above influence the extent to which the transition to democracy and the consolidation of democracy succeeds. Linz and Stepan define a democratic transition as completed “when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government *de facto* has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies *de*

²⁹ Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995: 42-43.

³⁰ Ibid.: 45-46.

³¹ Dahl 1998: 147, fig. 8.

³² Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995: 46.

jure.”³³ This definition provides a safeguard against the “electoralist fallacy”, the idea that free elections alone are seen as a sufficient condition of democracy. That a democratic transition has begun does not mean that it will be completed; an old military regime, for instance, can hand over control of state affairs nominally but retain such extensive powers that its successor, a democratically elected government, is not even *de jure* sovereign. Linz and Stepan term this scenario an electoralist nontransition. The condition that agreement should be reached regarding the specific institutional arrangements (e.g. a centralised or federal state, a presidential or parliamentary system, the type of electoral system) for producing democratic government is important because deep and permanent conflicts over such matters among political elites and the majority of the population undermines the stability of democracy.³⁴

After a completed democratic transition there is still a way to go before democracy can be considered consolidated. Linz and Stepan present three criteria for a consolidated democracy. Behaviourally, consolidation requires that no significant actors attempt to overthrow the regime or secede from the state. Attitudinally, consolidation implies that a strong majority of the people consider the democratic procedures and institutions the most appropriate way to govern society even when facing severe political and economic crises. Constitutionally, democracy is consolidated when all actors in the polity become habituated to resolving political conflicts according to established laws and procedures.³⁵

³³ Linz, Juan J., and Stepan, Alfred. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996: 3.

³⁴ Ibid.: 4.

³⁵ Ibid.: 5-6.

3. The ethnic structure and democracy in Pakistan

In this chapter I will examine how the ethnic structure in Pakistan has evolved and undermined the democratic process. The present chapter also provides some necessary background information for succeeding chapters, which focus primarily on the period 1988-1999, and is therefore structured chronologically, starting from the creation of Pakistan.

3.1 The origins of Pakistan's ethnic makeup

The idea of a separate Muslim state was from the outset a project rooted only in the Muslim minority areas of British India. Where they constituted a majority the Muslims naturally felt less threatened by the Hindu-Muslim strife that developed in British India especially from the 1920s onward. The Muslim League, the party most devoted to the idea of Pakistan, was well aware that the support of all Muslim regions was necessary for its vision to be realised. In 1940 Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the League's figurehead, attempted to overcome regional and ethnic divisions by portraying the Muslims as a "nation" apart from the Hindus in his famous Two-Nation Theory.¹ The Muslim League's vision was expressed in the 1940 Lahore Declaration that stated that the future Muslim state would consist of "autonomous and sovereign" constituent units, an obvious concession to the Muslim majority provinces that were primarily concerned with retaining their status.² Sufficient Muslim unity was achieved only by the mid-1940s as the polarisation between Hindus and Muslims increased. Jinnah also successfully applied a strategy of promising something to everyone while remaining very ambiguous regarding what Pakistan really meant.³

¹ Jaffrelot, Christophe. "Islamic identity and ethnic tensions" in Jaffrelot, Christophe (ed.). *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins (Anthem South Asian Studies)*. New York: Anthem Press, 2002: 12-13.

² *The Lahore Declaration*, cited in Hardy, Peter. *The Muslims of British India*. London & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972: 231.

³ Bose, Sugata and Jalal, Ayesha. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. New York: Routledge, 1998: 192.

In 1947 Pakistan emerged as a federation of the five Muslim majority provinces of British India: Punjab, East Bengal, Sindh, Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan. The demographic structure was problematic from the outset: the population of East Bengal was larger than that of the rest of the country put together, but also separated from the rest of the country by the entire stretch of North India. Punjab was the second most populous and by far the wealthiest of all regions, while Bengal was the poorest.⁴ The five provinces also represented the main ethnic groups in the country, i.e. Punjabis, Bengalis, Sindhis, Pashtuns (in NWFP) and Baluchis. One important group however lacked the historic association with a certain province, namely the 5-7 million Muslims that moved to Pakistan from the Muslim minority areas of British India. This group, commonly referred to as Muhajirs (migrants), came to dominate Karachi, the first capital, and other urban centres in Sindh.⁵

3.2 East vs. West Pakistan

The new nation was very much an “imagined community”: some 70 million people brought together who had very little in common except religion. In chapter 2 above it was argued that one way to manage ethnic and regional conflicts is by decentralisation of power. Although the need for this was acknowledged in the Lahore Declaration, successive Pakistani regimes adopted a consistent policy of suppressing regional aspirations by force.

The Muhajirs initially had an enormous influence in Pakistan despite their minor demographic size. Through the Muslim League they had a disproportional share in the political life of Pakistan and through the remains of the Indian Civil Service they were also prominent in the bureaucracy. The Muhajir elite was firmly in favour of a secular national identity. Such an identity, according to Nasr, would have had to justify the creation of Pakistan in socio-economic terms and therefore required an equal distribution of resources through wide-scale social reforms. However, the Muhajir and Punjabi politicians, bureaucrats and generals who ruled the country were from the beginning

⁴ Jaffrelot 2002: 20, table 1.1.

⁵ Jaffrelot 2002: 17.

dependent on the support of the landed classes in Punjab and Sindh. The convergence of interests between these diverse groups gave rise to a new ruling class, often referred to as the Establishment, which according to Nasr “closed the door to an equitable economic policy”.⁶ Another factor was the outbreak of war with India only a few months after Partition, which resulted in the enforcement of central authority over the provinces and the drainage of financial resources to the centre; the idea of a Pakistan consisting of “autonomous and sovereign” units was irrevocably lost.⁷

After the death of Jinnah in 1948 and his successor Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951 the Muhajirs’ political presence diminished as serious tensions between the two major provinces, Punjab and Bengal, began to unfold. Despite their numeric strength, the Bengalis were severely underrepresented in the bureaucracy and in the military, which was practically a Punjabi institution.⁸ Calls for a proportional share of power and resources went hand in hand with demands that Bengali be recognised as a national language. The Constituent Assembly that acted as a legislative body aside from working out a constitution was based on the 1946 election results and therefore had a Bengali majority. This meant that the Bengalis had an opportunity to safeguard their interests in future constitutional arrangements. The Assembly was however dismissed by the West Pakistani executive in 1954 and replaced by a second Assembly that swiftly implemented the One Unit Scheme that created a single province of West Pakistan. In this way the demographic advantage of the Bengalis was liquidated.

The military rule under Ayub Khan from 1958 to 1969 sealed Punjabi hegemony over the country. A reading of General Ayub’s autobiography reveals that the West Pakistani attitude towards Bengalis also had patronising and racist undertones; he writes for instance that the East Bengalis “have all the inhibitions of down-trodden races and have not yet found it possible to adjust psychologically to the requirements of the new-born

⁶ Nasr, S. V.R. “State, society, and the crisis of national identity” in Rais, Rasul Bakhsh. *State, Society, and Democratic Change in Pakistan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997: 107.

⁷ Jalal, Ayesha. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995: 49.

⁸ Jaffrelot 2002: 18.

freedom.”⁹ The 1960s saw significant economic progress in Pakistan, but the centralised military state ensured that resources were channelled especially in favour of Punjab. The use of incomes from the Bengali jute exports to finance the industrialisation of West Pakistan can be seen in terms of outright exploitation and the growing socioeconomic inequalities certainly contributed to the increasing politicisation of the Bengali population.¹⁰ The political voice of East Pakistan was by the 1960s dominated by the Awami League that in its 1966 programme returned to the Lahore Declaration’s idea of a true federation with autonomous and sovereign units.¹¹ The military regime accused the party of threatening national integrity in conspiracy with India and imprisoned the party leader Mujibur Rahman. This only succeeded in radicalising the Bengali popular sentiment and the ensuing unrest was one of the reasons the army conceded to holding Pakistan’s first national elections in 1970.

The demographic strength of the Bengalis was one likely reason that elections were constantly postponed in Pakistan after independence. However, before the 1970 elections the One Unit system was removed because of the resistance it met within West Pakistan itself and because the regime expected the vote to be so split as to produce no unanimous winner. That the Awami League won a massive majority, 160 out of 300 seats, is perhaps not as surprising in retrospect as it was at the time. Exactly why the result caught the military regime by surprise is still a mystery, Talbot interestingly speculates whether it was a genuine mistake or “whether it possessed more sinister implications”, implying perhaps that the secession of East Pakistan was seen as inevitable or even desirable in some quarters.¹² Neither the military nor the West Pakistani political opposition could tolerate a parliament and government dominated by the Bengalis. The army eventually tried to solve the problem by force, which led to a brief civil war, Indian military involvement and the secession of Bangladesh in 1971.

⁹ Khan, Mohammad Ayub. *Friends not masters: A political autobiography*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967: 187.

¹⁰ Jaffrelot 2002: 23.

¹¹ Talbot, Ian. *Pakistan: A Modern History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005: 188.

¹² *Ibid.*: 195.

The partition of Pakistan has often been seen as the final proof that Jinnah's Two-Nation theory was incorrect: Muslims did not constitute a nation by virtue of their religion or a supposedly common "Muslim culture", instead they were inherently and vertically stratified through ethnic and regional differences. According to this view, then, ethnic nationalism took over when the anti-colonial, political nationalism had run its course. Yet the most illuminating interpretation would perhaps be to see ethnic *awareness* as "primordial", but the politicisation of ethnic identities above all as a result of the inability or unwillingness of successive regimes to address the problems of a multi-ethnic society other than through force.

3.3 Ethnic conflicts since 1971

For West Pakistan, Bangladesh was in a way the "Final Solution" to the Bengal issue and a guarantee for Punjabi hegemony. Ethnic conflicts did not however end and nor did the central state's strategy of resorting to force to suppress these. This is evident for instance from the government's handling of the large movement demanding greater autonomy in Baluchistan that emerged in the early 1970s. The state responded by strengthening central control: the provincial government was dismissed and the "separatist" leaders imprisoned, which resulted in a Baluchi armed uprising.¹³ A massive military operation was then launched to pacify the region from 1973 to 1977. The side-effect of this was that the military again assumed a political role which contributed to the military coup in 1977.

The most enduring legacy of the 1970s was however the Sindhi-Muhajir struggle that took on civil war proportions during the 90s and contributed to the fall of all the democratically elected governments after 1988. In 1971 the Sindhi politician Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had come to power with his populist Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The PPP exploited and fuelled a nascent Sindhi nationalism that targeted especially the Muhajirs who dominated the urban centres of Sindh. Resentment against the Muhajirs' prominence in the bureaucracy as well as their prosperity vis-à-vis the Sindhis resulted in ethnic quota systems for the bureaucracy and nationalisations of industries and businesses owned by

¹³ Ibid.: 29.

Muhajirs.¹⁴ The Muhajirs had for long considered themselves the “true Pakistanis” since they had made the greatest sacrifice, left their homes, for the achievement of the new state – this was also used to justify the disproportionate influence they had always had.¹⁵ The community had however felt under pressure since the 1960s because of the influx of Punjabi and Pashtun settlers in Sindh and the gradual Punjabisation of the bureaucracy. During the 1970s, internal differences among Muhajirs began to fade out as a new, politicised ethnic identity evolved. Students played an important role in this, which also made the use of the epithet Muhajir interesting since many of those involved were born after Partition and were therefore in no sense migrants.¹⁶

General Zia ul-Haq’s military rule during the 1980s further aggravated ethnic tensions. The regulations on political activity effectively suppressed any nationwide agendas and encouraged localised, regionalised and ethnicised political expressions.¹⁷ Haq has argued that the Muhajirs had always supported “Pakistani nationalism” and opposed ethnic particularism, but that the growth of Punjabi, Baluchi, Pashtun and Sindhi ethnic movements practically forced them to also organise along ethnic lines.¹⁸ Consequently, in 1984, Muhajirs formed a political party to drive their interests, the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (“Muhajir National Movement”, MQM). Instead of trying to solve ethnic frustrations, the military regime exploited them, for instance by using Muhajir anti-Sindhi sentiments to contain the PPP.¹⁹

When free elections were announced in 1988, the stage was thus set for a party system with a strong ethnic predilection: the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) represented the Punjabis, the PPP represented the Sindhis and the MQM became a powerbroker that switched allegiances between the two former when necessary. The PPP’s narrow win in

¹⁴ Jaffrelot 2002: 26-27.

¹⁵ Ahmar, Moonis. "Ethnicity and state power in Pakistan: The Karachi crisis." *Asian Survey* 36.10 (1996): 1031: 1039.

¹⁶ Nasr 1997: 122-123.

¹⁷ Talbot 2005: 285.

¹⁸ Haq, Farhat. "Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of ethnic mobilization." *Asian Survey* 35.11 (1995): 995.

¹⁹ Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. "Democracy and the Crisis of Governability in Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 32.6 (1992): 528.

the 1988 elections forced the party into an alliance with the MQM. The two parties tried to find common ground in their anti-Punjabi sentiments, but Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto also had to meet the conflicting demands of Sindhi nationalists and Muhajirs. This would have been a very difficult task even if the government had not been paralysed by the activities of an aggressive opposition and a watchful military. One of the MQM's central demands was the repatriation to Sindh of the 250 000 Biharis that were, and still are, stranded in refugee camps in Bangladesh since the 1971 war. The Sindhis resisted this since it would in time, and in conjunction with general demographic trends, reduce them to a minority in their home province.²⁰ The MQM left the coalition within a year to form an anti-Sindhi alliance with the Punjabi opposition; this coincided with the outbreak of fighting between Muhajirs and Sindhis in Sindh.

Pakistan's role as a proxy in the Afghan war during the 1980s flooded the country with easily available weapons, which made the ethnic conflict in Sindh increasingly violent. The volatile security situation in Karachi, the largest city and commercial centre of Pakistan, began to have serious consequences on a national scale. In 1992 the military launched a massive campaign in Sindh, which generated accusations of genocide against the Muhajir community.²¹ The erosion of state power in Sindh opened up the prospects for a division of the province along ethnic lines. Such ideas were fuelled by the delimitation of constituencies that put Karachi under the control of rural Sindh.²² In 1994 the MQM began to toy openly with the idea of a separate Muhajir province. This sparked fears of the balkanisation of the entire country, since similar (though not nearly as strong) movements for ethnic autonomy were active in all four provinces. The PPP government responded by classifying the MQM as a terrorist organisation and refusing to negotiate with it.²³ By 1995 Muhajir alienation from both provincial and central authorities was complete and the situation in Karachi took on civil war proportions. The city's status as a commercial centre suffered as foreign investments dried up and domestic capital fled to Punjab. However, police and military forces successfully targeted MQM militants and by

²⁰ Talbot 2005: 304.

²¹ Ahmar 1996: 1035.

²² Ibid.: 1039, 1042.

²³ Haq 1995: 1002.

the 1997 elections law and order had, relatively speaking, returned to Sindh although the underlying problems were still not addressed.²⁴

Between 1988 and 1999, the primacy of ethnic loyalties rather than for instance class interests put serious strains on the democratic process. From all the elections during this period it is evident that the electorate was regionally/ethnically stratified. The PPP victory in the 1988 and 1993 elections was possible only because the party succeeded in obtaining a small share of the votes from Punjab. When it lost this support, as it did in 1990 and 1997, it also lost the elections; the Punjabi domination of the country was therefore never contested. Although the ethnification of the political discourse seemed to put the fundamental logic behind Pakistan into question, the continuity of the centralised state structure, and the Punjabi control of it, was ensured above all because of the praetorian role that the military retained throughout this period. Before discussing the military I will however turn to the political structure in Pakistan.

²⁴ Talbot 2005: 342-343.

4. The political structure and democracy in Pakistan

In this section I will examine the political system of Pakistan with the aim of showing how its structure, especially in regard to the parties and the party system, proved an obstacle for the democratic process. The focus will be on the period 1988–1999 although I will finally also consider the evolution of Pakistan’s political system in order to argue that the problems encountered during the period of study were not novel. I will begin by considering some theoretical approaches.

4.1 Political institutionalisation

The concept of *institutionalisation* is a helpful tool for assessing the character of the political system in Pakistan. The classic study on political institutionalisation is Huntington’s work, in which he defines the concept as “the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability”.¹ Huntington presents four interrelated criteria for political institutionalisation: *adaptability*, *complexity*, *autonomy* and *coherence*. *Adaptability* means primarily the ability of an organisation to adjust to new circumstances, e.g. a new generation of leaders or a change in the principal functions. In this way, an institutionalised political party for instance is able to shift from opposition to government or change constituencies: “[i]nstitutionalization makes the organization more than simply an instrument to achieve certain purposes”.² By *complexity* Huntington refers to the number and variety of organisational subunits. He argues that an organisation with many purposes is more adaptable than one with only a few. Huntington refers to the Aristotelian classification, in which simple political systems are characterised as generally short-lived.³ Thus complex political systems with many different political institutions are more likely to be stable since they can adjust to new needs more easily. *Autonomy* measures the integrity of an organisation, its differentiation from other spheres. Political institutionalisation requires organisations and procedures

¹ Huntington, Samuel P. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968: 12.

² Ibid.: 15-17.

³ Ibid.: 18-19.

that articulate the interests of several social groups. For instance a party that represents only one particular group in society has a less clearly defined existence, i.e. its autonomy is limited. A highly autonomous political system is also less vulnerable to non-political influences from society; it has means for minimising corruption and the impact of the military. *Coherence* is a measure of the unity of an organisation and of the consensus regarding its functional boundaries. A coherent organisation shows internal discipline as well as methods for resolving internal conflicts.⁴

Randall and Svåsand have refined Huntington's theory further and considered the obstacles in the way of party institutionalisation in the Third World.⁵ They list in particular four party features that are important for assessing the level of institutionalisation. The first issue is the importance of a party's origins and development. The democratic transition in the third wave has typically been rapid which has meant that parties have had to form very quickly, giving the organisations little time to develop any of Huntington's four criteria. Electoral success can in such circumstances also prevent organisational institutionalisation as the attention is given to governance. The second aspect affecting party institutionalisation is the relationship between the party and its leadership. Parties in the new democracies are often criticised for being personal instruments of a "great leader". Without a pre-existing organisation or an established identity, parties often revolve around ambitious individuals with charisma or access to the necessary resources and amount to largely opportunistic coalitions. The adaptability of such parties is unlikely to be sufficient to hold them together in the long-term. Adaptability is also undermined by charismatic leadership and therefore institutionalisation requires routinisation of charisma. The third common feature of parties in the Third World is factionalism. Factions can reflect ideological differences, social or cultural cleavages or leadership struggles and thereby damage the cohesion of the organisation. Fourthly, Randall and Svåsand discuss the implications of clientelism for party institutionalisation. Clientelism can exist both within parties as well as between

⁴ Huntington 1968: 17-24.

⁵ The present paragraph is based on Randall, Vicky and Svåsand, Lars, "Party institutionalisation and the new democracies" in Haynes, Jeff (ed.). *Democracy and Political Change in the Third World*. New York: Routledge, 2001: 77-90.

parties and their supporters. Patronage-based politics is commonly seen as damaging to party organisation because it reduces the meaning of rules and procedures. Clientelism as such is a vague concept and could reasonably include the party's channelling of resources to its constituency, which is what most parties seek to do. But if clientelism approaches corruption, it becomes a threat to the autonomy of the organisation as well as lessening its coherence. A related issue is the question of the character and loyalty of the party's support base. Mass parties with a broad social base appear to be less common in the new democracies, while parties with strong links to particular religious or ethnic communities are more prevalent. In such cases identification with and support for the party can be highly instrumentalist and dependent on visible benefits to the community in question.

Apart from parties, Randall and Svåsand also consider the institutionalisation of party systems. They argue that a party system must have a certain level of competition in order to be conducive to democratic consolidation, although it is impossible to specify the ideal amount of competition. The concept of a party system involves several relationships, between parties themselves and between parties, the state and the electorate. The internal structure of an institutionalised party system requires continuity and stability among party alternatives. Continuity means that the choice of parties remains more or less the same across several elections, while stability implies that support for individual parties does not vary a great deal between elections. These are important considerations in order to guarantee the principle of political accountability, i.e. the ability of voters to express their views on a party's past performance through elections. Institutionalisation also requires that parties view each other as legitimate competitors, that political opposition is accepted. As for the external structure of the party system, a basic prerequisite is sufficient autonomy from the state. Thus support for the party system should be evenly distributed and not involve conditions that reduce the individual parties' autonomy. The electorate must also trust the parties as institutions and perceive the electoral process as the only legitimate way to select political leaders and pursue political goals.⁶

⁶ Randall and Svåsand 2001: 90-92.

Randall and Svåsand argue that party institutionalisation is often uneven under conditions of democratic transition. Parties with a close association with preceding authoritarian regimes have advantages that limit the possibilities for institutionalisation of other parties; this in turn reduces the entire party system's competitiveness and adaptability. Another possible area of conflict is when a party is strongly institutionalised because of its identification with an exclusive ethnic or cultural grouping. Randall and Svåsand suggest that "when only one party monopolises the electorate within each group, competition does not really exist". In other words, parties based on exclusive forms of cleavage rather than broader categories can be an obstacle to the institutionalisation of the party system by restricting competition between parties, undermining the principle of mutual acceptance and weakening public confidence in political parties.⁷

4.2 Institutionalisation and the main political parties

The Pakistani constitution of 1973 stipulates that elections for the National Assembly are carried out through single member territorial constituencies.⁸ This election system is commonly considered conducive to a two-party system. Consequently, the return to party-based elections in Pakistan in 1988 led to the domination of the political arena by two parties: the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI, "Islamic Democratic Alliance")/Pakistan Muslim League (PML). In this section I will look more closely at the structure of these two parties.

4.2.1 The Pakistan People's Party

Understanding the history of the Pakistan People's Party is essential for assessing its later institutional character. The party was formed in 1967 around the broad popularity and charismatic qualities of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a major landowner from Sindh. The PPP was initially a populist party with a strong socialist tinge, yet after the party gained power in 1971 Bhutto began to purge the radical elements and embarked on a policy of "smooth

⁷ Randall and Svåsand 2001: 93-95.

⁸ "The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.", Article 51 (4a), <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/> (accessed March 23rd, 2010).

transition to socialism” which involved co-opting major landlords in exchange for support. As ideology was replaced by patronage the PPP eventually became ridden with factions with no interest in the original party principles.⁹ The party’s primary function as an extension of Bhutto’s personality became even more articulated; to secure his control Bhutto deliberately kept the organisation weak and allowed no internal elections for party offices during the 1970s.¹⁰ In 1977 Bhutto was deposed by the military and eventually executed on very tenuous charges. As for the question of succession in the party, Bhutto had no apparent intention to “routinise his charisma” and instead groomed his daughter for party leadership.¹¹

The PPP, like all political parties, was banned under General Zia’s military rule, but the organisation lived on under the umbrella of the Movement for Restoration of Democracy set up in 1981. When Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan from exile to lead the PPP in 1986, she was merely 32 years old and had no first-hand experience of party politics. Yet she was able to derive legitimacy from the Bhutto name that was already an established brand and that the execution of her father had perhaps only strengthened. She further mythologised her father’s legacy by routinely referring to him as Shaheed (“martyr”) Bhutto, for instance in the PPP election manifesto of 1988.¹² Benazir Bhutto’s own personality as a young, well-spoken, western-educated, modern and moderate Muslim woman also added to her popularity as well as to the expectations invested in her.

Bhutto quickly set about remodelling the party which, according to Nasr, did great damage to the party’s organisational structure, for by purging the old guard of the party Bhutto lost many talented and popular politicians. These were replaced by people who were loyal to her but often lacked independent bases of support within the party.¹³ Above

⁹ Ziring, Lawrence. "Pakistan: A political perspective." *Asian Survey* 15.7 (1975): 633-634.

¹⁰ Shah, Sayed Wiqar Ali, “Pakistan People’s Party: The twin legacies of socialism and dynastic rule” in Mitra, Subrata K.; Enskat, Mike and Spiess, Clemens (eds.). *Political Parties in South Asia (Political Parties in Context)*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004: 165.

¹¹ Shafqat, Saeed. "Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto." *Asian Survey* 36.7 (1996): 656.

¹² “Pakistan Peoples Party, Manifesto – 1988”, passim, <http://www.ppp.org.pk/manifestos/1988.html> (accessed March 5, 2010).

¹³ Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. "Democracy and the Crisis of Governability in Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 32.6 (1992), 525.

all, the new PPP crew was selected based on their ability to win votes, thus they largely represented the feudal elite.¹⁴ Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari was also instrumental in recruiting many opportunists, including close allies to General Zia, to the party in exchange for generous donations to the party fund.¹⁵ This inevitably weakened the PPP's pro-democratic credentials and the morale of many party activists.¹⁶ Bhutto also departed from the PPP's established image when she disposed of the last remains of socialism in the party's ideology and called for privatisation, attracting investments and other market economy measures. While this may have been dictated by necessity or pragmatism, the party saw no need to formally change its principles and the 1988 manifesto still displayed the original PPP slogan "Socialism is our economy".

The most audible and visible element in the PPP ideology was however the issue of democracy. The democratic rhetoric was primarily directed against the military rulers and their supporters, but it was also no doubt a convenient rallying cry to present for the outside world – during a visit to the US in 1989 Bhutto gave several speeches celebrating the "universal value of democracy".¹⁷ Indeed, Bhutto's speeches and writings reveal a veritable inflation in the use of the word "democracy" and she for instance refers to herself as a "symbol of democracy".¹⁸ This nominal commitment to democracy stands in stark contrast to how the PPP in practice was managed. Shafqat has described Bhutto as "torn between the democratic-liberal ideal (acquired through her education) and an autocratic reality, which is part of her feudal social background in rural Sindh".¹⁹ After elections were held and the PPP formed a government in 1988 the democratic rhetoric perhaps lost some of its importance. It is also quite reasonable to assume that Bhutto was too preoccupied with her tasks as Prime Minister and the intrigues of Pakistani politics to tend to the party structure. She however made no effort to hold

¹⁴ Bray, John. "Pakistan at 50: A State in Decline?." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 73.2 (1997): 320.

¹⁵ Talbot, Ian. *Pakistan: A Modern History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005: 297.

¹⁶ Nasr 1992: 525.

¹⁷ E.g. pages 2-15 in Panhwar, Sani H. (ed.), *Benazir Bhutto - Selected speeches from 1989-2007*, unpublished 2009, available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/16609501/Benazir-Bhutto-Selected-Speeches-19892007>. (accessed March 23rd, 2010)

¹⁸ Bhutto, Benazir. *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*. London: Pocket Books, 2008: 191.

¹⁹ Shafqat 1996: 656.

elections within the party or democratise its organisation, neither before the 1988 elections nor ever after.²⁰ The succession procedure after Benazir Bhutto's assassination in 2007 gives a good indication of the PPP's command structure: in her will Bhutto named Asif Ali Zardari her successor. He however handed the party leadership over to his son Bilawal Zardari, who consequently changed his name to Bilawal *Bhutto* Zardari.²¹ The PPP thus appears to be driven by a belief in what Weber refers to as "hereditary charisma".²²

Despite Bhutto's modern and democratic outlook, the PPP retained an essentially traditional and feudal character; the party's support was strongest in rural areas while the majority of its successful candidates were prominent landowners. The party also had strong support among the lower classes and therefore had the reputation of being the party of the poor among its opponents.²³ The PPP's main constituency has always been rural Sindh where the Bhutto family originates from. The rise of minor Sindhi parties with radical agendas as well as the MQM in the 1980s managed to split the PPP vote slightly, yet the party has remained dominant on home turf. The key to power for any Pakistani party was securing a foothold in Punjab, the most populous province that had 115 of the 207 seats in the National Assembly. In the two elections that the PPP lost, 1990 and 1997, it was the loss of votes in Punjab that was decisive.²⁴ In Punjab, kinship groups known as *biradari* have a particularly great influence on voter behaviour, and the promise of specific benefits to constituents is a necessity for parties campaigning in the province. One explanation for the PPP's failure in Punjab is indeed that the party lacked

²⁰ Syed, Anwar H. "The Pakistan People's Party and the Punjab: National Assembly Elections, 1988 and 1990." *Asian Survey* 31.7 (1991): 595-596.

²¹ "Bhutto's son named successor", *BBC News*, 30.12.2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7164968.stm. (accessed March 25th, 2010)

²² Weber, Max. "Sociology of the world religions: Introduction", n.d., Internet edition available at http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/world/intro/world_intro_frame.html. (accessed March 25th, 2010)

²³ Wilder, Andrew R. "Changing Patterns of Punjab Politics in Pakistan: National Assembly Election Results, 1988 and 1993." *Asian Survey* 35.4 (1995): 383.

²⁴ Ziring, Lawrence. "Pakistan in 1990: The fall of Benazir Bhutto." *Asian Survey* 31.2 (1991): 121; Syed, Anwar H. "Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif's Second Chance to Govern." *Asian Survey* 38.2 (1998): 117.

its opponent's experience of patronage politics and instead was seen as providing little more than slogans.²⁵

In government the PPP had to resort to clientelism to secure the support of conflicting interest groups, e.g. labour groups and the industrial elite, as well as potential allies. Jobs and positions in the party, government and bureaucracy were handed out with little consideration to competence and experience, further underscoring the mismanagement of public affairs.²⁶ Outright corruption was also extensive and the PPP was implied in several shady affairs involving bank loans and property.²⁷ Asif Ali Zardari quickly became a serious burden for the entire party's public image. As minister of investments from 1988 to 1990 he earned the epithet "Mr. Ten Per Cent" for his alleged practice of collecting personal commissions in his duties. Zardari was also implied in the murder of the Prime Minister's brother in 1996 after a leadership struggle in the PPP between the two Bhutto siblings.²⁸ During the 1990s he served many years in prison on charges of kidnapping, extortion, murder and corruption.²⁹

The PPP thus comes across as an adaptable organisation at least in the sense that it, despite the death of its founder and a long period of repression under military rule, has remained firmly established in public consciousness as one of the major parties since the 1970s. Yet the only coherent structure in the party has been supplied by the unquestioned leadership of the Bhutto family and possibly the link to rural Sindh, and its complexity has not consequently been significant. Beyond the facade of democratic rhetoric the PPP's ideology has been ambiguous and opportunistic; as an organisation the party's primary purpose seems to have been to gain power at any cost. The party's reliance on clientelistic relationships for support and stability made it everything but autonomous and the risk of defections was always high, as we shall see below. On the other hand, the failure of the PPP as an organisation and as a party in government was also a

²⁵ Wilder 1995: 393; Syed 1991: 584.

²⁶ Nasr 1992: 527, 530.

²⁷ Ziring 1991: 115-116.

²⁸ Jaffrelot, Christophe. "A fruitless search for democracy" in Jaffrelot, Christophe (ed.). *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins (Anthem South Asian Studies)*. New York: Anthem Press, 2002: 87.

²⁹ Zardari, it must be added, was elected President of Pakistan in 2008.

consequence of the nature of the party system and the political culture in Pakistan after 1988.

4.2.2 *The IJI/PML*

During the 1970s, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the PPP had made many enemies; the nationalisation of thousands of small enterprises alienated the middle classes, while the party's secular and socialist elements generated strong antipathy among conservative Muslims. Because of the PPP's reputation as a "party of the poor", the military and the Pakistani elites also feared the party's potential ability to mobilise the lower classes.³⁰ The revival of the PPP by a new Bhutto was therefore not welcomed by those groups in society that thrived under General Zia's rule: the military, the landed elites, the urban middle classes and the Punjabis, among others.

For this reason the military and the intelligence agency ISI brought together several parties in the IJI coalition to act as an anti-PPP force in the 1988 elections.³¹ The IJI's main component was the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) that had been revived by General Zia a few years back and the coalition therefore had a strong connection to the *ancien régime*. The IJI was led by Nawaz Sharif, a wealthy industrialist from Punjab who had been a close ally of Zia and served as Chief Minister in Punjab during the 1980s. Sharif assumed a similar autocratic style of leadership as Bhutto and the rivalry between the two quickly escalated to a personal level; Sharif also had a long-standing feud with the Bhuttos since his family business had been nationalised by the PPP in the 70s.³²

The parties in the IJI had very little in common except for opposition to the PPP, which could not provide either the ideology or the organisational structure with sufficient coherence. The PML and the conservative religious party Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) were in fact antagonists since decades back because of ethnic and ideological differences and

³⁰ Syed 1991: 586.

³¹ Bose, Sugata, and Jalal, Ayesha. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. New York: Routledge, 1998: 235.

³² Talbot 2005: 321.

therefore very uncomfortable allies.³³ In terms of policy, the party did not differ significantly from the PPP although it was more successful in presenting itself as pro-business and promising privatisation, incitements for investment and deregulation.³⁴ In the beginning, the IJI naturally showed no trace of the PPP's democratic fervour given that it was a creation of those elements in society that had benefited from authoritarian rule. Because of the PPP's secular stance the IJI was able to monopolise the Islamic rhetoric. Yet when the party came to power in 1990 the superficiality of its commitment to an Islamic state became evident and the IJI subsequently left the alliance.³⁵

The IJI's major forte was the backing it enjoyed, at least until 1991, by the military and the President. The party's ability to establish a strong support in Punjab was also very important; in national and provincial elections the IJI always fared much better in Punjab than the PPP - Sharif's and the PML's strong links in the province were clearly an advantage. The IJI also played the ethnic card by portraying itself as a protector of Punjabi interests and expressing anti-Sindhi sentiments.³⁶ While the PPP's voters were predominantly rural and lower class, the IJI had a solid support base among the urban middle classes of Pakistan.³⁷ Much like in the PPP however, the great majority of the IJI's elected candidates were landlords.³⁸

As a broad coalition party, the lack of coherence was perhaps even greater in the IJI than in the PPP. The IJI's primary purpose of opposing the PPP also resulted in a serious lack of adaptability; after the PPP had been toppled and the IJI formed a new government in 1990 the coalition lost its *raison d'être* and gradually disintegrated. The PML itself eventually split into two factions and from the 1993 elections onwards the PML-N (N stands for Nawaz) replaced the IJI as the second element in the two-party system. Without the burden of an uncomfortable alliance the party perhaps gained some coherence and adaptability. The focus on Punjabi interests became clearer, but the

³³ Nasr 1992: 534.

³⁴ Rais, Rasul Bakhsh. "Pakistan: Hope amidst turmoil." *Journal of Democracy* 5.2 (1994): 137.

³⁵ Jaffrelot 2002: 85.

³⁶ Talbot 2005: 300-301.

³⁷ Rais 1994: 137.

³⁸ Syed 1991: 584.

opposition to the PPP remained the driving force and the centrality of Nawaz Sharif in the IJI/PML reduced the complexity of the organisation. After the crushing PML victory in the 1997 elections the party, and especially Sharif, was certainly strong but not in a way that was conducive to the democratic process, as we shall see below. The Pakistani political system of the 1990s did not allow especially a ruling party the option of autonomy from the military or the President and between 1990 and 1993 Sharif lost the unquestioned support of both. The IJI's/PML's autonomy was greatly reduced by the reliance on clientelism. This also affected the government's ability to function properly; in the early 1990s for instance the party's need to award its supporters with government jobs resulted in a bloated cabinet consisting of 49 ministers, ministers of state and advisors.³⁹ By 1992 Pakistani politics had become so highly monetized that one observer was led to conclude that the government had become "a hostage to elected representatives [as] money became the only measure of political loyalty".⁴⁰

4.3 Agitation and confrontation – the inter-party dynamic

The biggest obstacle to the institutionalisation of the party system in Pakistan between 1988 and 1997 was without a doubt the power invested in the President. The 1973 constitution had opted for a prime ministerial system and awarded the President a largely ceremonial role. In 1985 however Zia ul-Haq, who was both army chief and President, introduced the Eighth Constitutional Amendment which was aimed at securing his control of the government after the non-party elections in the same year. The most controversial provision concerned Article 58(2)(b) of the Constitution and stipulated that "the President may also dissolve the National Assembly in his discretion where, in his opinion, a situation has arisen in which the Government of the Federation cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and an appeal to the electorate is necessary".⁴¹ Problematic were also the provisions that granted the President the right to appoint the top military chiefs as well as the Chief Justice. The Eighth

³⁹ Khan, Rais Ahmad. "Pakistan in 1992: Waiting for change." *Asian Survey* 33.2 (1993): 130.

⁴⁰ Nasr 1992: 532.

⁴¹ "Constitution (Eighth Amendment) Act, 1985", <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/amendments/8amendment.html>. (accessed March 29th, 2010)

Amendment effectively denied the sovereignty of Parliament and the resulting political system is often referred to as “diarchy” or “viceregalism” with reference to the political system introduced in British India in 1919. In 1988 General Zia perished in a plane crash, but this did not of course alter the Constitution; Zia’s successor as President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, did not hesitate to use the powers invested in him.

Given this constitutional framework and the creation of the IJI to undermine the PPP, the conditions for developing a functioning party system after the 1988 elections were not good. The PPP manifesto declared that “it is our honest desire to cooperate with [other political parties] in the larger interest of democracy and nation building. We are determined to guide the political process of the country towards establishing a mature, mutually respectable and participatory system”.⁴² Whether or not this was sincere, Pakistani politics quickly degenerated into an aggressive game in which the opposing side was given no legitimacy.

The complications arising from the PPP’s obligation to form a coalition with the MQM in 1988 have already been mentioned. Still more serious was the PPP’s failure to win the provincial elections in the Punjab, which gave Sharif the ability to assume the office of Chief Minister in Punjab and make the provincial assembly the forefront in his struggle against the PPP. He embarked on a path of confrontation by driving a wedge between the centre and Punjabi interests and by making demands for increased provincial autonomy.⁴³ The PPP reciprocated by staging opposition walkouts in the Punjab assembly, thus denying the provincial government legitimacy, and by attempting to topple Sharif by votes of no confidence.⁴⁴ While the central government spent most of its energy countering attacks from its opponents, the PPP met a united opposition in the National Assembly. Parliament was effectively paralysed as a legislative body and passed no meaningful legislation during 1988-1990.⁴⁵

⁴² “Pakistan Peoples Party, Manifesto – 1988”: ch. 41.

⁴³ Talbot 2005: 299-301.

⁴⁴ Shafqat 1996: 665.

⁴⁵ Nasr 1992: 530.

The central government's weakness vis-à-vis the provinces led to a deteriorating law and order situation in Sindh. Consequently, the MQM broke its alliance with the PPP in late 1989, less than a year after the elections. Earlier in her term Bhutto had hoped to repeal the Eighth Amendment, but since constitutional amendments required the support of two thirds of Parliament this now seemed a very remote possibility. The MQM then joined the IJI in the vote of confidence against the government in November that year. The absence of rules for switching party allegiance midterm had turned the assemblies into veritable marketplaces and during the run-up to the no-confidence motion enormous sums of money were exchanged as the PPP and IJI tried to purchase the support of assembly members. One week before the vote the lack of party loyalty and coherence forced both parties to put "vulnerable" members under house arrest, so that the opposing side could not entice them with their offers. The government eventually won the vote, but the opposition vowed to try again and it was evident that the amount of competition in the party system far exceeded the level that was conducive to a working democracy.⁴⁶

In the end, the PPP government fell above all because Bhutto had questioned the President's powers and antagonised the military, which I will discuss in more detail in chapter 5. In August 1990 President Ghulam Ishaq Khan used his powers under the Eighth Amendment to dismiss the Bhutto cabinet on charges of corruption, lack of legislative initiative and failure to enforce law and order.⁴⁷

In the 1990 elections the main contending parties were the same as in the previous elections, so there was certainly an element of continuity in the party system. But in the debate preceding the elections retrospection replaced policy issues completely; the focus was on the Bhutto administration's record and on whether the President had been right to dismiss the government.⁴⁸ The PPP's manifesto from 1990 no longer promised cooperation with the opposition, which is perhaps an indication of disillusionment with

⁴⁶ Ziring, Lawrence. "Pakistan in 1989: The politics of stalemate." *Asian Survey* 30.2 (1990): 132-134.

⁴⁷ Rais 1994: 136.

⁴⁸ Syed 1991: 584.

the party system.⁴⁹ During the election campaign, the IJI as well as the interim government made concerted efforts to undermine the PPP's and Bhutto's image by filing numerous charges of corruption and mismanagement against them. The government-controlled media was also unbalanced in favour of the IJI and Bhutto was portrayed as having "Zionist links", too amicable relations with the US and generally as a danger to the nation's security.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, in the election the PPP and IJI shares of the total vote were less than 1 per cent apart, but the distortional effect of the Pakistani plurality voting system gave the IJI 70 seats more in the National Assembly.⁵¹ That the PPP would contest the results and accuse the IJI and the President of rigging the elections seems almost logical, given the confrontational political culture that had emerged during the previous few years. However, the consensus seems to be that rigging did occur, but not on a scale that significantly altered the outcome – this was also confirmed by international observers.⁵²

Apart from having a large majority in the central assembly, the IJI managed to win control over all the provincial assemblies. Thus Sharif's prospects seemed promising, bearing in mind that he also had the support of the military and the President. Both Sharif and Bhutto initially pledged to lay the past aside and proceed through cooperation.⁵³ One observer, writing in early 1992, saw plenty of scope for optimism, seeing that there were no unbridgeable ideological differences between the government and the opposition.⁵⁴ Yet this assessment must be considered superficial, since the role of the President, and by extension the military, allowed the government practically no mobility; Sharif was completely dependent on the President, in whose hands *de facto* control over the IJI members of Parliament rested.⁵⁵ Sharif therefore had to choose between contesting the

⁴⁹ "Pakistan Peoples Party, Manifesto - 1990", <http://www.ppp.org.pk/manifestos/1990.html>. (accessed March 5, 2010)

⁵⁰ National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). *The October 1990 Elections in Pakistan*. N.p.: 1991: vi; Ziring 1991: 119.

⁵¹ Talbot 2005: 311, 313.

⁵² NDI 1991: v-vi.

⁵³ Ziring 1991: 122.

⁵⁴ Khan, Rais A. "Pakistan in 1991: Light and shadows." *Asian Survey* 32.2 (1992): 198-199.

⁵⁵ Wasseem, Mohammad. "Pakistan's Lingering Crisis of Dyarchy." *Asian Survey* 32.7 (1992): 629.

political structure of diarchy and being content with his situation – in the end the choice was impossible to make.

As the persecution of Bhutto, her family and fellow PPP members through criminal investigations carried on, the PPP retaliated by filing its own allegations against the IJI. The IJI was for instance accused of sanctioning illegal loans from government-controlled institutions to a corporation owned by Sharif.⁵⁶ It matters little in this context whether these allegations were true or not – the important issue is the systematic use of such allegations for political ends. Bhutto was also skilful in driving a wedge between the President and the Prime Minister; the IJI had the majority in Parliament required to repeal the Eighth Amendment which perhaps motivated Sharif to contest the President's powers in appointing the new army chief in 1991.⁵⁷ In 1992 the IJI coalition crumbled, as mentioned above, and Sharif lost his forte in the National Assembly. The timing was unfortunate since relations between Ishaq Khan and Sharif had reached a low point and they both consequently had to turn to Bhutto for support. Bhutto first seemed to side with Sharif, but also initiated secret negotiations with the presidential camp. With the help of the PPP, the government could conceivably have repealed the Eighth Amendment, which was also one of the policy statements in the PPP Manifesto.⁵⁸ Many of Bhutto's colleagues pressed for cooperation with the IJI, but in the end opportunism won over ideology: Bhutto purged the dissident voices and struck a deal with the President, who then dismissed the Sharif cabinet.⁵⁹ The Supreme Court then made an unprecedented decision and ruled the President's action unconstitutional, reinstating the Sharif government. The ensuing aggressive power game between Ishaq Khan and Sharif ended only when the military forced both to resign. With a dismissal, an interim government, a reinstatement, another dismissal and interim government and finally an election Pakistan saw five Prime Ministers in 1993, which is indicative of the chaos that was Pakistani politics.

⁵⁶ Wasseem 1992: 628-9.

⁵⁷ Yasmeen, Samina. "Democracy in Pakistan: The Third Dismissal." *Asian Survey* 34.6 (1994): 577.

⁵⁸ "Pakistan Peoples Party, Manifesto - 1990": ch. 24.

⁵⁹ Yasmeen 1994: 585.

The 1993 elections were above all indecisive since neither party gained a sufficient mandate to pursue any significant changes in the political system. The PPP gained a narrow majority in the National Assembly and also formed a coalition government in Punjab, although the PML seemed to have received a slightly larger share of the total vote.⁶⁰ The PML “naturally” claimed the interim government had manipulated the outcome, but the elections were generally considered the fairest to date in Pakistan.⁶¹ Most importantly, the PPP loyalist Farooq Leghari was elected President, which meant that the government had no reason to diminish its power by repealing the Eighth Amendment. This could in any case not have been done without the opposition, who surely had no wish to strengthen the PPP in this way.

During Bhutto’s second term the dynamic of the party system followed a pattern that was well established by now. In order to prevent the IJI from operating, the government filed a multitude of charges against Sharif and other central figures, the complex and time-consuming litigation procedure in Pakistan being an efficient way of keeping the opposition busy. The government also menaced its opponents by for instance removing the passports of a number of people and by seizing property belonging to Sharif.⁶² The IJI, for its part, accused the government as well as the President of corruption and made open invitations to the military to intervene.⁶³ 1994 also saw national strikes organised by the opposition, which were followed by physical assaults on PML assembly members by PPP activists.⁶⁴ When the opposition was not boycotting the National Assembly sessions, it challenged the government on every issue, regardless of importance. Consequently, the assembly’s standing as a political institution was no stronger than it had been in the past and most legislation had to be passed through presidential ordinance.⁶⁵ The government itself seemed to have deteriorated as an institution as Bhutto sought to concentrate power in her own hands and manage everything through her office.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Rais 1994: 139.

⁶¹ Amin, Tahir. “Pakistan in 1993: Some dramatic changes.” *Asian Survey* 34.2 (1994): 195.

⁶² Shafqat 1996: 669; La Porte, Robert. “Pakistan in 1995: The continuing crisis.” *Asian Survey* 36.2 (1996): 181.

⁶³ Amin, Tahir. “Pakistan in 1994: The politics of confrontation.” *Asian Survey* 35.2 (1995): 140, 141.

⁶⁴ Talbot 2005: 339.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: 334.

⁶⁶ La Porte 1995: 180.

Several factors contributed to the dismissal of Bhutto's second government, most of them linked to the weak institutionalisation of the political system. The lack of central authority had turned the unrest in Sindh into a virtual civil war. The government had classified the MQM as a terrorist organisation, refusing to initiate dialogue with it, and thereby turned the Sindh crisis from a political question into a law and order issue.⁶⁷ The political turmoil had also led to serious mismanagement of the Pakistani economy, which was headed towards an abyss by 1995. The country was ranked the second-most corrupt in the world which further discouraged investments and made the IMF increasingly reluctant to assist.⁶⁸ The PPP's use of the judiciary as a political weapon was probably the motivation for Bhutto's attempt to appoint judges who were loyal but lacked the required experience. The Supreme Court however resisted these moves, deeming them unconstitutional, which resulted in severe tensions between the judiciary and the government. Eventually the President intervened and sided with the Supreme Court, while Bhutto accused the opposition of manipulating the judiciary to topple her government. The relationship between President Leghari and Bhutto also deteriorated due to arguments over military appointments and when Bhutto's brother was murdered in 1996, Bhutto implied Leghari's involvement while the PML accused Bhutto and Zardari for the deed. Finally, in November 1996, Leghari invoked the Eight Amendment to dismiss the government on charges of corruption, nepotism, defying the judiciary, implying the President's involvement in extrajudicial killings etc. Bhutto charged the opposition and the intelligence agency ISI of influencing the President, but the general opinion seemed to be that she deserved to go.⁶⁹

That the dismissal of the PPP government was not lamented by the citizenry became evident in the 1997 elections. The party was practically wiped out as it received only 19 seats out of 207 in the National Assembly, all but one of these from Sindh. The PML on the other hand won 135 seats at the centre and control over all the provincial assemblies. This outcome implied that the PPP was no longer a national party, but rather a

⁶⁷ Talbot 2005: 343.

⁶⁸ La Porte, Robert. "Pakistan in 1996: Starting over again." *Asian Survey* 37.2 (1997): 123.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 119-21.

regional/ethnic one and that the two-party system had come to an end.⁷⁰ However, with an election turnout of 35.92 per cent serious questions arise regarding the legitimacy of the entire democratic process.⁷¹

The PML thus began its term with a dominant position and Sharif quickly moved to further enhance his powers. In April 1997 he repealed parts of the Eighth Amendment to strip the President's authority to dissolve the National Assembly and appoint military leaders. While this was welcomed by many as a victory for the democratic institutions of the country, the real motive behind amending the constitution was by all likelihood that Sharif did not trust President Leghari who had been close to the PPP and Bhutto. After a clash with the Supreme Court regarding the appointment of judges, Sharif had Parliament pass a motion that forced the President to dismiss the chief justice. Leghari refused to do this and instead resigned, giving Sharif the opportunity to appoint a family friend President.⁷²

With a loyal president, the support of all assemblies, a weak and fragmented opposition and a subservient judiciary, Sharif's position approached what has been termed "parliamentary dictatorship".⁷³ In order to force party cohesion and prevent the opposition from "buying" votes Sharif also passed a constitutional amendment that allowed party leaders to expel any member who voted against the party. Sharif then took control of the accountability process through which investigation of corruption in the previous regime was carried out and in 1999 Bhutto and Zardari were sentenced to five years in prison. However, when the judgement was passed Bhutto had already left the country and, as Rizvi puts it, "decided to extend her stay".⁷⁴ Thus the only remaining threat to Sharif's power, and the only threat he could not remove, was the military. The PML's clash with the military and the dismissal of Sharif's government through the 1999 military coup is discussed in more detail in chapter 5 below.

⁷⁰ Syed, Anwar H. "Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif's Second Chance to Govern." *Asian Survey* 38.2 (1998): 118-119.

⁷¹ Talbot 2005: 378.

⁷² Jan, Ameen. "Pakistan on a precipice." *Asian Survey* 39.5 (1999): 705.

⁷³ Jaffrelot 2002: 89.

⁷⁴ Rizvi, Hasan-Askari. "Pakistan in 1999: Back to square one." *Asian Survey* 40.1 (2000): 210; Jan 1999: 706.

4.6 Institutional weakness as a long-term structural problem

The brief time and difficult circumstances between Zia's death in August 1988 and the general elections in November 1988 certainly provide part of the explanation to why parties and the party system failed to institutionalise initially. However, it is also a fact that Pakistan had no history of strong democratic institutions and there were therefore no traditions or procedures that could be revived. The historical theory of the last decades strongly advises against discerning continuity between events that are decades apart and yet it is difficult to look at the history of Pakistan without thinking about similarities, patterns, traditions and precedents. Above all, it seems unreasonable to think that the past had no connection with events in and after 1988.

Talbot and Jalal have perhaps been the strongest advocates of seeing continuity between the colonial legacy of authoritarianism, the ambiguities of the Pakistan movement and subsequent political developments.⁷⁵ One important reason for the failure of political institutionalisation in Pakistan seems to be the centralisation of power in the Muslim League prior to the partition of British India. As mentioned in chapter 3, the Muslim League had its strongest support base in areas where Muslims were a minority. Yet by the 1946 provincial elections, the Muslim League had succeeded in virtually monopolising the political voice of the Muslims of British India. This achievement was accompanied by a policy of deeming opposition illegitimate; the League was quick to accuse rival parties as enemies of Islam and the Indian Muslim community. At the time of Partition, the League was a weakly organised and factionalised party with power firmly centralised in the hands of Jinnah and his allies.⁷⁶

After Partition Pakistan established a Constituent Assembly based on the 1946 elections. The Assembly had the double task of acting as a legislature and drafting a new constitution. The colonial legacy of authoritarianism and centralisation was present through the Government of India Act of 1935 that was used as a provisional constitution. This Act gave the Governor-General wide-ranging powers, for instance dismissing

⁷⁵ This is most evident in Talbot 2005 and Jalal 1995.

⁷⁶ Talbot 2005: 91-92.

provincial governors through Article 93, which in its wording has a remarkable similarity to the Eighth Amendment.⁷⁷ This provision was utilised several times during the 1940s and 1950s. After independence, the Muslim League also continued to discourage its opponents, partly through propaganda that equated the national interest with that of the League, but also for instance through the Public and Representative Officers Disqualification Act (PRODA) of 1949. The PRODA made it possible for anyone to file charges of corruption, nepotism or misconduct against politicians and it was used enthusiastically to attack political rivals, who faced exclusion from public life for ten years if found guilty. Worrisome was also the fact that the special tribunals that tried the cases were appointed by the Governor-General.⁷⁸ It is important to note that since they were migrants, the Muhajirs who dominated politics and the bureaucracy had lost their political base and this is one of the likely reasons that elections were not held in the country early on; instead of parliamentary rule the Muhajirs favoured the colonial tradition of bureaucratic rule.⁷⁹

After the death of Jinnah in 1948 and the assassination of his successor, Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951 the Muslim League began to crumble. The reason for this can be explained in terms of a lack of adaptability: the League had come to be identified with Jinnah and his close allies and could not renew itself after they had departed. The party failed to renew itself also ideologically since it was to a large extent built around an anti-colonial nationalism that lost its meaning with the creation of Pakistan. In a sense the demise of the League was both the cause and the effect of growing provincialisation and ethnification of Pakistani politics. As chapter 3 revealed, the 1950s saw increased tension between the Punjabis in West Pakistan and the Bengalis in East Pakistan. The political intrigues also revealed the uneven political institutionalisation in the two wings of Pakistan: Bengal was the first area conquered by the British in the 18th century and had been much more exposed to representative institutions than the areas comprising West Pakistan that were annexed almost a century later and ruled through patronage and

⁷⁷ “Government of India Act (1935)”,

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1935/pdf/ukpga_19350002_en.pdf. (accessed April 6th, 2010); the office of Governor-General was replaced with that of the President in the 1956 constitution.

⁷⁸ Jaffrelot 2002: 64.

⁷⁹ Talbot 2005: 111.

“bureaucratic authoritarianism” rather than political participation.⁸⁰ The Bengalis’ demands were strongly opposed by the Punjabi-dominated West Pakistan and resulted for instance in the declaration of a state of emergency in 1954 to prevent the adoption of a constitution prepared by the Bengali Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra. The subservience of the judiciary was then established as the Supreme Court infamously declared this procedure unconstitutional but justified on the basis of the “law of necessity”.⁸¹ The 1956 constitution appeared to satisfy Bengali demands for adequate representation, but the West Pakistani political elite secured its interests by investing the President with powers to dismiss both central and provincial governments. The parliamentary system envisioned by the Constitution was in any case unable to operate because of the absence of a viable party with a national political agenda. The party system was paralysed by factionalism within the parties and the regionalisation of politics and in 1958 martial law was declared as the military took over.⁸² The fate of the party system under Ayub Khan’s military rule is discussed in more detail in chapter 5 below.

After more than a decade of military rule, Pakistan witnessed its first ever direct and free general elections in 1970. As already mentioned, the military regime had expected the large number of contending parties to split the vote effectively, but instead the Bengali-based Awami League won 160 out of 300 seats, a clear mandate to form a national government although all of the seats were won in East Pakistan.⁸³ In West Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s PPP dominated the elections with its 80 seats and the electorate was thus neatly polarised along regional lines. Bhutto immediately contested the results, claiming that the principle of majority rule was not the only consideration in this situation and demanding shared power with reference to the PPP’s role in the fight against military rule.⁸⁴ With his inability to concede power to the Awami League, Bhutto is commonly seen as the chief architect of the destruction of Pakistan’s national integrity.

⁸⁰ Talbot 2005: 54-65.

⁸¹ Jalal 1995: 52-53.

⁸² Jaffrelot 2002: 67-68.

⁸³ Talbot 2005: 195.

⁸⁴ Jaffrelot 2002: 75.

After the secession of Bangladesh in 1971 Bhutto in any case had it his way as he was appointed President, although the legitimacy of PPP rule can perhaps be questioned since the party had received its mandate in a unified Pakistan, under very different circumstances. The state of emergency declared in 1971 allowed the party to govern by postponing elections and the new constitution adopted in 1973 scheduled elections for 1977. Bhutto's domination of the PPP and the party's weak institutionalisation has been discussed above. The PPP also dominated the party system of the 1970s and secured its control by various means: a provision in the Penal Code was used to ban political discussion and public meetings and in 1975 the National Assembly passed a law that allowed the government to declare a party guilty of operating against the integrity of Pakistan. This law was then used to ban assertive opposition parties and arrest their leaders.⁸⁵ The media was also tightly controlled by the government, the major newspapers became effectively PPP organs, while the independent press was menaced with provisions that allowed suspension of publication without due process. Apparently, Bhutto also toyed with the idea of postponing the 1977 elections with reference to unspecified domestic and international events.⁸⁶

The 1977 elections eventually took place as scheduled and saw the formation of an opposition coalition, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), consisting of nine minor parties ranging from leftist groups dissatisfied with Bhutto's abandonment of his radicalism to religious parties who were sceptical of Bhutto's enthusiasm for working towards an Islamic state. That such diverse interests could not be accommodated in a coherent policy is not very surprising. That the PPP won the elections was not either a surprise for anyone, but based on the preceding campaign many had expected the PNA to fare much better. The PPP won 155 seats against the PNA's 36, which immediately triggered charges of rigging and while it appears that some fraud did occur, it did not significantly alter the results. The PNA nevertheless demanded new elections supervised by the military and judiciary and initiated a campaign of anti-government agitation which

⁸⁵ Ziring, Lawrence. "Pakistan: A political perspective." *Asian Survey* 15.7 (1975): 643.

⁸⁶ Weinbaum, Marvin G. "The March 1977 Elections in Pakistan: Where Everyone Lost." *Asian Survey* 17.7 (1977): 600, 602.

quickly escalated into violent unrest.⁸⁷ Jalal has argued that had the PPP had an effective and committed party organisation, Bhutto could have countered this threat. But the weak institutionalisation of his party forced him to turn to the military for support, thereby enforcing the already established Pakistani tradition of turning political questions into issues of law and order.⁸⁸ The military, disillusioned by the bickering of the politicians, came to its own conclusions and removed Bhutto through a coup. The military rule of General Zia ul-Haq is presented in more detail in the next chapter.

⁸⁷ Weinbaum 1977: 614-615.

⁸⁸ Jalal 1995: 84-85.

5. The political army and democracy in Pakistan

In this section I will examine how the political involvement of the Pakistani armed forces conditioned the democratic process after 1988. I will firstly present some theoretical background regarding military involvement in politics generally and then look more closely at the case of Pakistan. I shall finally consider the legacy of military interference in Pakistani politics which makes the army a long-term structural obstacle to democracy.

5.1 Political armies: some theoretical considerations

The tension in civil-military relations is, as Feaver notes, in a sense inherent in civilisation. Feaver describes the civil-military problematique as a delicate balancing act: the primary purpose of the military is to protect society and for this reason it must be vested with sufficient strength and coercive power. Yet on the other hand, the military should not be so powerful as to become a threat to the society it is meant to protect.¹

Koonings and Kruijt use the term *political armies* for “military institutions that consider involvement in – or control over – domestic politics and the business of government to be a central part of their legitimate function”.² The academic study of military involvement in politics has largely focused on two theories: the “modernisation” theory distinguishes between the apolitical professional armies of the “old” capitalist democracies and the modernising armies of the “new” nations. According to this view, the rapid and uneven process of modernisation in developing countries coupled with the weakness of political institutions and fragmentation of social structures gives the military opportunity and motivation for political intervention. In situations of political instability, the armed forces consider themselves the only institution able to govern and further modernisation due to their organisational superiority, technical know-how and hierarchical structure. Within this tradition it has been common to argue that the military’s role in politics is temporary,

¹ Feaver, Peter D. "Civil-military relations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 214-5.

² Koonings, Kees and Kruijt, Dirk. “Military politics and the mission of nation building” in Koonings, Kees and Kruijt, Dirk (eds.), *Political Armies: The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy*. London: Zed Books, 2002: 1.

that mature political institutions and political culture evolve through the process of modernisation and eventually establish legitimate and stable civil rule.³

The second theory has a Marxist leaning and argues that the elites that have the means to drive modernisation and democracy in developing countries instead have used military intervention and extended periods of military rule to perpetuate their economic and social positions. The problem, then, is not modernisation *per se* but the socioeconomic stratification and stagnation in these societies. The more moderate strand of this theory holds that the lack of unity and strength among the elites has resulted in the military being the only institution able to create “the necessary sense of common purpose” for nation building.⁴

Koonings and Kruijt have, largely based on the first of the above theories, distinguished some common factors that explain the rationale and formation of political armies. Firstly, the political army has a strong identification with the nation, its ideology and destiny through what Koonings and Kruijt call the “birthright principle”. If the military perceives itself to have made a significant contribution to the birth and survival of the nation it may also consider itself “exceptionally well placed not only to defend but also to define the essence of the nation”.⁵ The military thus extends its role from protecting only the territorial security to safeguarding the politico-institutional security of the nation. The state is conceived as the primary domain of the nation and defending the state against any internal or external threat thereby becomes a permanent military task. By expanding its role to the non-military arena, to political and administrative tasks, the military attempts to strengthen its legitimacy as a political actor. Another regular feature of political armies is the creation of a security doctrine by which the military motivates its actions. The doctrine typically outlines the desired social order, the threats to stability and the basic values considered the foundation of national identity.⁶

³ Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 16-17.

⁴ Ibid.: 17-18.

⁵ Ibid.: 19.

⁶ Ibid.: 20.

Koonings and Kruijt also mention the “competence principle” which is the idea that the military through its hierarchy, unity, efficiency and control of the means of coercion claims to have the best ability to drive national interests and the affairs of state. Through its models of recruitment and training the political army can also see itself as standing above the ethnic and social divisions of the nation and as a vehicle for national integration. This is related to the political armies’ idea of civilians as divided, corrupt, inefficient and potentially even anti-national. For the political army, “the nation is not a nation of citizens that seek active representation in its political institutions, but a nation of the people as an abstract category, held together – often precariously – by the state”.⁷

De Kadt has presented a simple typology of military regimes that includes ruler regimes that stay in power for long and exercise wide political control, guardian regimes that declare their intention to wield formal power only for a limited time and finally moderator regimes that exercise veto power without being formally in charge of politics.⁸ A common scenario is that the military intervenes when a malfunctioning of the civilian government, due to e.g. violent internal conflict, corruption or inefficiency, seems likely to threaten the institutions of the state, including the military itself. Direct military involvement in such situations often gives military rule at least temporary legitimacy. To prolong and stabilise the new regime, military rule is often institutionalised by adopting two strategies: firstly the state itself is militarised through new constitutional and legal arrangements and by the creation of new state institutions aimed at neutralising the existing political arena. Secondly, the military rulers attempt to form a support base that includes civilian politicians, technocrats and elites, possibly in the form of a new or existing “King’s party”. The loyalty of these groups is then nurtured with various political and economic concessions.⁹

As can be deduced from the above, political armies view democratic civilian government with fundamental ambiguity. The military rationale revolves around cohesion, discipline and obedience and because of this mental framework the military regards the implications

⁷ Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 21.

⁸ De Kadt, Emanuel. “The military in politics: old wine in new bottles” in Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 315.

⁹ Ibid.: 320-1.

of democratic rule as highly unpredictable. Consequently, the political institutions that military regimes create give little space for dialogue, negotiation and participation. Military regimes also regard dissent with impatience which means that competitive political activity is not likely to be encouraged.¹⁰

De Kadt, among others, has argued that prolonged military rule tends to erode the institutional unity of the army, fuel corruption and slowly undermine civilian support as it becomes evident that the military's ability to manage the political and economical affairs of state is not, after all, superior.¹¹ However, because of the military's monopoly on coercive power the most likely way for military rule to end is by voluntary action by the army itself.¹² Linz and Stepan have argued that the military-as-institution may conclude that the costs of direct involvement in politics threaten their "enduring interests and permanent functions that transcend the interests of the government of the day".¹³ The political army can then devolve power to a weak civilian coalition, which gives the military a strong position to negotiate terms that secure its influence even under formally democratic rule. The military can put strong constraints on the incoming government by, for instance, placing supporters of the *ancien régime* in key state positions and by insisting on retaining constitutional amendments it has itself created.¹⁴ In such a case it is impossible to maintain a rigid dichotomy between civilian and military rule; the "transition" is in fact often rather a "nontransition" into a mixed system of rule since there is no *de facto* civilian control of the armed forces.¹⁵

¹⁰ Rizvi, Hasan-Askari. "The paradox of military rule in Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 24, no. 5 (1984): 536.

¹¹ De Kadt 2002: 327.

¹² Heeger, Gerald A. "Politics in the Post-Military State: Some Reflections on the Pakistani Experience." *World Politics* 29, no. 2 (1977): 246.

¹³ Linz, Juan J., and Stepan, Alfred. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996: 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 67, 82.

¹⁵ Heeger 1977: 243.

5.2 The military and democracy in Pakistan 1988-1999

The military's major contributions to the failure of Pakistan's "third wave" must be traced back to the regime of General Zia ul-Haq (1977-1988). In 1985 the military had already formally ended military rule by arranging carefully orchestrated National Assembly elections. The 1985 elections were carried out on a non-party basis (political parties had been banned on Martial Law provisions from 1978) and probably took place only because the military knew that its strategy of clientelism would secure a parliament consisting of loyal members of the middle classes, property owners and the business community.¹⁶ In exchange for lifting Martial Law General Zia¹⁷ then had the National Assembly pass the Eighth Constitutional Amendment which I have already discussed in chapter 4.¹⁸ The military had thus effectively institutionalised its prominent role in Pakistani politics for the long term. The Eighth Amendment of course literally concerned the President's powers to dismiss the Prime Minister and Parliament without consulting the Senate or Supreme Court, but given the nature of the Pakistani state it was clear that these were decisions that would be taken only by the order or approval of the military high command.¹⁹ The depoliticisation of society during the 1980s turned the focus to local and ethnic loyalties, thereby undermining the prospects for the emergence of a broad, national opposition party.

5.2.1 A failed experiment in power-sharing, 1988-1990

Despite the limited opportunities for national politics, the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) headed by Benazir Bhutto had gained momentum after Bhutto's return to Pakistan in 1986. Rizvi, writing in the same year, maintained that excluding this movement completely from politics through new restrictions on political activity was

¹⁶ Jaffrelot, Christophe, "A fruitless search for democracy" in Jaffrelot, Christophe (ed.). *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins (Anthem South Asian Studies)*. First Edition ed. New York: Anthem Press, 2002, 82.

¹⁷ Zia assumed the office of President in 1978 (while also retaining his military position) and extended his tenure for five years in 1984.

¹⁸ Bose, Sugata and Jalal, Ayesha. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. New York: Routledge, 1998: 234.

¹⁹ Ibid.: 234.

likely to only intensify the pressure on the government.²⁰ Nasr has argued that when General Zia perished in the plane crash in 1988, the military opted to make “a grand exit before the time when the democratic movement could have matured and overwhelmed it”; this way the military could make a controlled withdrawal and retain significant powers.²¹ Related to this is Rizvi’s speculation that the army began to perceive overt political power as a strain on its reputation and professionalism.²² Consequently, after Zia’s death the constitutional choreography was followed and Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Chairman of the Senate and a close ally of the military regime, was named Acting President, while party-based elections were scheduled for November 1988.

The army could not have tolerated a PPP sweep of the elections and for this reason ensured a formidable opposition. A former head for the ISI is on record confirming that his agency and the military gave financial and “logistic” support for the formation of the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI), which consisted of various anti-PPP groupings.²³ The PPP surely knew that the situation was precarious, which is evident from the PPP election manifesto of 1988. The manifesto strongly condemns the previous regime’s undemocratic character, mismanagement of state affairs and divide-and-rule tactics but is quite careful not to directly criticise the military-as-institution.²⁴ The party states as its aims strengthening democracy, parliamentary rule and the institutions of state but does not mention limiting the influence of the military. Indeed it seems the PPP was aware that the army would not retreat into the barracks after the elections since the manifesto states that “[...] the armed forces should be given a role in nation building activities”.²⁵

It has been noted that after the election the President invited Bhutto to form a government only after a two-week delay. Bhutto herself claimed that Ishaq Khan and the military

²⁰ Rizvi, Hasan-Askari. "The Civilianization of Military Rule in Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 26.10 (1986): 1077.

²¹ Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. "Democracy and the Crisis of Governability in Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 32.6 (1992): 523.

²² Rizvi, Hasan-Askari. "The legacy of military rule in Pakistan." *Survival* 31, no. 3 (1989): 256-7.

²³ Jones, Owen Bennett. *Pakistan: The Eye of the Storm*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002: 240.

²⁴ "Pakistan Peoples Party, Manifesto – 1988." <http://www.ppp.org.pk/manifestos/1988.html>. (accessed March 5, 2010)

²⁵ *Ibid.*: ch. 14.2.

spent this time attempting to assemble a coalition government with small parties and independents as well as securing an IJI majority in the critical Punjab Assembly in the provincial elections that were held shortly after the national elections.²⁶ The PPP majority was however too large and the President and the military finally had to concede to a government led by Bhutto, but the military was still in a position to dictate the terms under which the government could be formed. The armed forces had no intentions to allow civilian control of themselves and made Bhutto consent to not interfere in internal affairs of the military (i.e. service conditions and appointments), retain a large defence budget and allow General Aslam Beg to continue as Chief of Army Staff. The military secured a direct involvement in foreign affairs by insisting on controlling the Afghanistan policy and allowing Zia's foreign minister to keep his position. Bhutto also agreed to let Ghulam Ishaq Khan continue as President for five years.²⁷ Consequently, the military not only safeguarded its own autonomy, but also effectively institutionalised its role in the political sphere. In other words, power was shared rather than transferred and the political system that emerged from the 1988 elections was mixed rather than purely democratic.

Despite the uneasy PPP-MQM alliance the government lacked the two-thirds majority required to make constitutional amendments, i.e. to revoke the Eighth Amendment. It is widely believed that the army, in particular through the ISI, actively tried to undermine the functioning of the government and it did not take long for tensions to arise between the two. In May 1989 Bhutto encroached on turf the military conceived as its own when she replaced the head of the ISI in an attempt to control the intelligence agency and later that year she tried to influence a senior military appointment, although the Eighth Amendment explicitly authorised the President to make this decision. The deteriorating law and order situation in Sindh then gave the military a stake in politics as the government lost control of the situation and the army was deployed to pacify the area. The crisis was further aggravated by the fact that the Sindhis were naturally the PPP's core constituency, while the Muhajirs were widely represented in the army – General Beg

²⁶ Bhutto, Benazir. *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*. London: Pocket Books, 2008: 197-8.

²⁷ Shafqat, Saeed. "Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto." *Asian Survey* 36.7 (1996): 660.

himself had a Muhajir background.²⁸ The military wanted to impose martial law in the area or set up its own courts to deal with the situation, but the government was unwilling to effectively allow a parallel military government in Sindh.²⁹

With military-government relations at a low point, Bhutto made another attempt to influence a military appointment decision in June 1990. To the armed forces Bhutto's assertiveness signalled that she attempted to introduce civilian control of the armed forces and breach the informal, but very real power-sharing agreement. Bhutto also pursued a foreign policy that was not in line with military interests, especially making overtures towards India. Improved relations with India would naturally have undermined the military's authority by invalidating its security doctrine. The senior military leaders let the President know that they could no longer support the government and in August 1990, when the world's heads were turned to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Ishaq Khan used the Eighth Amendment to dismiss the government.³⁰ Nasr has claimed that the military's intervention was essentially benevolent since it aimed "to restructure Parliament with a view to strengthening the government and hence the democratic institutions".³¹ If this is true, it would be another example of the military's self-conceived ability and authority to judge the best interests of the nation.

5.2.2 The end of the military-IJI axis

The 1990 elections were considered reasonably fair, but the caretaker government had with military blessing launched a veritable propaganda campaign against the PPP which involved multiple charges of corruption and extortion. This, coupled with an already unpopular PPP, secured a comfortable IJI majority in the national and provincial assemblies. Nawaz Sharif's prospects as Prime Minister seemed promising since he had the support of the military, President Ghulam Khan and the provincial assemblies. Yet

²⁸ Wasseem, Mohammad. "Pakistan's Lingering Crisis of Dyarchy." *Asian Survey* 32.7 (1992): 625.

²⁹ Malik, Iftikhar H. *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997: 243.

³⁰ Shafqat 1996: 661-3, 666.

³¹ Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. "Democracy and the Crisis of Governability in Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 32.6 (1992): 533, 537.

the problems, including civil-military relations, that strained Bhutto eventually also shadowed Sharif's government.

The first rupture in the relationship with the military came with the Gulf War when the armed forces began to pursue an independent foreign policy. General Beg openly questioned the government's support for the US and called it "anti-Muslim" and although the outcome of the war eventually changed the army's inclination the incident contributed to tensions between Sharif and the Islamic parties in the IJI coalition.³² Sharif then trespassed on military territory by unsuccessfully attempting to replace General Beg with a "pro-Prime Minister" general, which infuriated not only the army but also the President.³³ In addition, the Prime Minister had plans to relieve the army of some of its financial resources at a time when US military aid had been cut off due to Pakistan's nuclear ambitions. This move, whether motivated by greed or a wish to limit the armed forces' influence, was never carried out but still did not ameliorate civil-military relations because it amounted to a serious infringement of the power-sharing arrangement.³⁴ Sharif also inherited the problems in Sindh, where rural areas were practically controlled by bandits by 1991 while Karachi suffered from violence due to factional strife within the MQM. In 1992 the army launched its Operation Clean-up in the region despite Sharif's reluctance. The actions of army, paramilitary and police forces in Sindh resulted in accusations of genocide against the Muhajir community and a deep mistrust against the national government among the local population.³⁵

It seems that President Ishaq Khan steadily assumed a more autonomous role than before and consequently that Sharif started to treat the President as an independent political institution rather than as an extension of the military. That the military allowed this development was perhaps due to temporary disorganisation and weakness as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) was replaced twice between 1991 and 1993. Having again failed to get his own candidate chosen for COAS, Sharif threatened the President with a revision

³² Nasr 1992: 534.

³³ Yasmeen, Samina. "Democracy in Pakistan: The Third Dismissal." *Asian Survey* 34.6 (1994): 577.

³⁴ Jalal, Ayesha. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective (Contemporary South Asia)*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995: 112-3.

³⁵ Ahmar 1996: 1034-5.

of the Eighth Amendment and looked to Bhutto for the necessary parliamentary support. Bhutto had spent her time in opposition mending relations with the military and taking advantage of the escalating mistrust in the *troika* consisting of Prime Minister, President and COAS.³⁶ In the end she opted for revenge on Sharif, and agreed to support the re-election of Ishaq Khan should he dismiss the government and call mid-term elections. This he did in April 1993. As Aqil Shah has said, it seems that in Pakistan, “once out of power, political leaders have never hesitated to cut a power-sharing deal with the military, even if that has meant legitimating its institutionalized political role”.³⁷

As already mentioned in chapter 4, the Supreme Court then decided to reinstate the government and National Assembly. But since it was certainly in its interest to protect the President (as institution, but not as person in this case), the military in the end asserted its supreme authority and decided the constitutional war by forcing both Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Nawaz Sharif to resign. Ishaq Khan had perhaps become too independent for the military’s liking. Talbot speculates that Martial Law would have been imposed at this time, had the economic and diplomatic climate been different. Because the military did not want to assume overt responsibility for dealing with the political and economic crisis it instead set up an interim government led by Moeen Qureshi, a former Vice-President of the World Bank, whose task was to introduce major economic reforms that were expected to prove highly unpopular.³⁸

5.2.3 From military moderation to military coup, 1993–1999

The military seems to have taken a remarkably discreet role in Pakistani politics between 1993 and 1997. One major explanation is certainly the dire political (and economic) situation mentioned above; it is quite reasonable to speculate that the military considered the costs of overt political involvement too great – they were certainly high for the politicians of the time. Some writers of the time, however, lauded the new military generation as professional and apolitically motivated and claimed that civil-military relations appeared to be maturing, “with increasing trust, mutual tolerance, and non-

³⁶ Shafqat 1996: 668.

³⁷ Shah, Aqil. "Pakistan's 'armored' democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 14.4 (2003): 34.

³⁸ Talbot 2005: 328-330.

interference in each other's domains".³⁹ With the benefit of hindsight, these assessments must be termed a little premature.

The 1993 elections were widely acclaimed as among the fairest and most transparent ever.⁴⁰ From a military point of view, the elections secured the status quo in the political system of Pakistan; since the PPP majority was only marginal the National Assembly was effectively reduced to inertia and there could be no threat to the Eighth Amendment. Indeed, after Bhutto's close ally and PPP loyalist Farooq Leghari became President it was apparent that the government had nothing to gain by limiting presidential powers.⁴¹ Assuming the office of Prime Minister again, Bhutto appeared to have learned from her mistakes and took great care in her dealings with the army. She refrained from interfering in military appointments until the end of 1995, when she unsuccessfully put forth her own candidate for COAS.⁴² Bhutto also pursued the military's interests by actively trying to procure arms from the US and by resisting cuts in the defence budget despite the grave economic outlook. Nor did she criticise the military's decisions and for instance gave swift approval to an intensification of the campaign to pacify Sindh in 1994.⁴³ The military thus had no significant role in the dismissal of the second PPP government in 1996, rather it was a result of the fall-out between Leghari and Bhutto and the political turmoil discussed in chapter 4. The military was not of course completely neutral and gave its blessing to President Leghari's action, judging it best for the national interest.⁴⁴

After relative invisibility during Bhutto's second term, the armed forces then made an assertive comeback into politics. In 1997 the provisional government created the Council of Defence and National Security (CDNS), an institution headed by the President and consisting of the Prime Minister, the foreign, defence, interior and financial ministers and the top army generals. Its purpose was to "advise" the government on policies affecting defence and national security; Generals Zia and Beg had both earlier proposed the

³⁹ Shafqat 1996: 670; Wasseem 1992: 634.

⁴⁰ Bray 1997: 318.

⁴¹ Yasmeen 1994: 587-8.

⁴² La Porte, Robert. "Pakistan in 1996: Starting over again." *Asian Survey* 37.2 (1997): 118.

⁴³ Shafqat 1996: 669-70.

⁴⁴ Malik, Iftikhar H. *The History of Pakistan (The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations)*. New York: Greenwood Press, 2008: 188.

formation of a similar body, the existence of which would prevent a military coup. Essentially then, the creation of the CDNS was a “constitutional coup”, a formalisation of the idea that the military should share decision-making with the elected institutions of state.⁴⁵

During Sharif’s second term, the armed forces’ involvement in the affairs of state was also institutionalised in another, more discreet but no less problematic way. The accelerating decay of civilian institutions resulted in the military being called in to manage routine administrative tasks; the army, for instance, was engaged in the 1998 census, in several road-building projects and the management of the Water Power and Development Authority. Consequently, the military came to be seen as an employer and provider of welfare services apart from being the guardian of the nation.⁴⁶ Another reason for employing the army in such tasks was to give it a stake in allowing Sharif to rule since control of public institutions gave the military major economic benefits; it gave the army “all the benefits of ruling without any of its responsibilities”.⁴⁷ The distinction between the state and the army inevitably became even more blurred.

Nawaz Sharif’s second term in office amounted to, as we have seen, “parliamentary dictatorship” and it is perhaps surprising that the military did not intervene earlier, considering that Sharif even managed to limit the President’s power by repealing the Eighth Amendment, which also weakened the CDNS. One might speculate that it was still the prospect of having to deal with enormous political and economic problems as well as diplomatic considerations that made the army reluctant to act. It was only when Sharif’s apparent power hunger turned directly against them that the military lost all reservations. Rizvi has argued that it was Sharif’s personalisation of powers and success in appointing his own candidates as President and provincial governors as well as in taming the judiciary that encouraged him to confront the army.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Talbot 2005: 351-2.

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 363-4, 378.

⁴⁷ Jan, Ameen. "Pakistan on a precipice." *Asian Survey* 39.5 (1999): 707.

⁴⁸ Rizvi, Hasan-Askari. "Pakistan in 1999: Back to square one." *Asian Survey* 40.1 (2000): 211.

In 1998 the army chief General Karamat expressed his concern regarding the destabilising effects of political polarisation, incompetence and economic deterioration. This reference to the desired political order might have been interpreted as a warning for impending military involvement for, as Koonings and Kruijt argue, coups are "often preceded by some kind of announcement".⁴⁹ Sharif then took to divide-and-rule tactics by forcing the COAS to step down and replacing him with Pervez Musharraf, hoping that a predominantly Punjabi army leadership would support a Punjabi Prime Minister rather than a Muhajir army chief.⁵⁰ Karamat's assessment was, however, shared by the entire upper echelons of the military and in 1999 Sharif's boldness went too far. That year, in the incident known as the Kargil War, Pakistani troops crossed the Line of Control in Kashmir and occupied parts of the Indian-administered areas. Fighting broke out between Pakistan and India amidst widespread international criticism and the conflict only ended when Sharif was summoned to Washington and instructed to withdraw troops – which he did without consulting the COAS.⁵¹ Uncertainty prevails over how the Pakistani operation was conceived: Sharif claimed that the army operated without his prior knowledge and blamed Musharraf for the humiliating outcome of the conflict. Musharraf on the other hand maintained that the Kargil operation was a joint decision of the military and civilian authorities.⁵² As a consequence of this conflict military-civilian relations deteriorated beyond repair.

The army, with General Karamat's forced resignation in fresh memory, could not approve of Sharif's dismissal of Musharraf in October 1999 since this undermined its autonomy and corporate entity.⁵³ With the Eighth Amendment repealed, the military had no constitutional way of dealing with Sharif and saw as its only option arresting Sharif and charging him for treason. Emergency was declared in the country which suspended the constitution and assemblies, while Musharraf was named Chief Executive. In his Address to the Nation on October 13th Musharraf said:

⁴⁹ Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 23.

⁵⁰ Rizvi, Hasan-Askari. "Pakistan in 1998: The polity under pressure." *Asian Survey* 39.1 (1999): 181.

⁵¹ Jaffrelot 2002: 90-91.

⁵² Rizvi 2000: 212.

⁵³ *Ibid.*: 212.

“My singular concern has been the well-being of our country alone. This has been the sole reason that the army willingly offered its services for nation-building tasks [...] Despite all my advices, [the government] tried to interfere with the armed forces, the last remaining viable institution [...] Our concerns again were conveyed in no uncertain terms, but the Government of Mr Nawaz Sharif chose to ignore all these, and tried to politicize the army, destabilize it and tried to create dissension within its ranks. [...] The armed forces have moved in as a last resort, to prevent any further destabilization. I have done so with all sincerity, loyalty and selfless devotion to the country [...] We shall preserve the integrity and sovereignty of our country to the last drop of our blood.”⁵⁴

The above passage reveals a key feature of political armies: the military’s identification with the destiny of the nation, the “competence principle”, i.e. its self-perception as the only institution able to rule, and its consequent responsibility to intervene in order to protect the integrity of the state. Also evident is the severity of the threat to the military’s internal cohesion and corporate identity. In another address on October 17th, Musharraf maintained that “[t]he armed forces have no intention to stay in charge any longer than is absolutely necessary to pave the way for true democracy to flourish in Pakistan”.⁵⁵ In other words, the military considered itself able to identify the best interest of the nation and produce the desired political order.

5.3 The political army as a long-term structural problem

Looking at the history of Pakistan it is evident that the tension between the military’s involvement in politics and the evolution of representative institutions has been present since the first year of independence. For this reason the military’s political role must be viewed as a long-term structural issue.

⁵⁴ “General Pervez Musharraf’s address to the nation, October 13, 1999”, http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/post_12oct99/musharraf_address_13oct1999.html (accessed March 13th, 2010).

⁵⁵ “General Pervez Musharraf’s address to the nation, October 17, 1999”, http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/post_12oct99/musharraf_address_17oct1999.html (accessed March 13th, 2010).

The Pakistani military's origins are in the British Indian Army that together with the Indian Civil Service constituted the *de facto* colonial state in India.⁵⁶ In the terms used by Koonings and Kruijt, the “birthright principle”⁵⁷ of the Pakistani army does not stem from a contribution to the actual birth of the country as the partition of British India was brought about by constitutional means. Yet the military certainly considered itself instrumental to the survival of the nation immediately after independence. Unlike India, Pakistan did not have an established central state structure after Partition and the pressing need to impose central authority over provinces that had previously been governed from Delhi quickly gave the army a prominent role in this “nation-building”.

The outbreak of war between Pakistan and India in 1948, so soon after Independence, proved a defining moment for the Pakistani army: the security doctrine was born in which the army's and the nation's interests were seen as identical. Ayub Khan himself recalled that “from the moment Pakistan came into being I was certain of one thing: Pakistan's survival was vitally linked with the establishment of a well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led army”.⁵⁸ Consequently, in the first few years after Partition, defence had a share of up to 70 percent of the national budget which was possible only by diverting scarce financial resources from the provinces before political processes were even clearly defined. Along with the resources it was inevitable that the institutional balance of power also shifted in favour of the unelected institutions, i.e. the military and the bureaucracy.⁵⁹ Jalal however refutes the modernisation theorists' argument that the military from the outset had a strong organisation in comparison with the political parties. Instead she maintains that that it was “the interplay of domestic, regional and international factors” as well as a deliberate strategy by the bureaucracy and army that eroded the position of political parties.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Malik 1997: 44.

⁵⁷ Koonings and Kruijt 2002: 19.

⁵⁸ Khan, Mohammad Ayub. *Friends not masters: A political autobiography*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967: 21.

⁵⁹ Talbot 2005: 119; Jalal 1995: 49.

⁶⁰ Jalal 1995: 53-4.

Another explanation for the military's early assumption of a prominent role in politics is provided by Malik, who adheres to the Marxist theory mentioned in the theoretical introduction to this chapter. He argues that the urban-rural as well as ethnic and regional divisions among the elites in the Indian subcontinent blocked the evolution of a mass-based political culture and a nation-wide middle class. This allowed the state more mobility and a focus on administration rather than representation. Furthermore, he maintains that the elites have managed to adjust to new socio-economic and political circumstances and exchanged support for the regime for guarantees for their survival. Most importantly, Malik argues that the alliance between elites and the central state apparatus was already well established in colonial times and did not essentially change after Partition.⁶¹ A related issue was the concentration of power in West Pakistan and the Punjabi domination of the military and bureaucracy, despite the fact that East Pakistan was the most populous part of the country. One of the motives for military involvement in politics was to prevent Bengali domination of the state; for the West Pakistani landed elites this was particularly pressing since Bengali populist parties such as the Awami League made strong calls for land reform.⁶²

The years 1953-4 saw the beginnings of direct military interference in Pakistani politics: the Governor-General⁶³ Ghulam Mohammad in alliance with the military dismissed the Bengali Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin and the Constituent Assembly that had tried to curb his powers – a choreography very similar to that of the 1990s. The military-bureaucratic establishment then maintained the facade of democracy until Ayub Khan's military coup in 1958. One explanation for the coup, advocated especially by Jalal, is the fear that the outcome of the elections scheduled for 1959 would have jeopardised Punjabi class and institutional interests.⁶⁴ This also implies that the military did not step in as the “only viable institution left” because of the weakness of the political parties but rather that the army saw the prospect of strong politicians in a viable democratic system as a threat. It is also possible that the military interpreted a key feature of political life, the

⁶¹ Malik 1997: 50, 81-82.

⁶² Talbot 2005: 126.

⁶³ The office of Governor-General was replaced by the office of President in the 1956 constitution.

⁶⁴ Jalal 1995: 54-55.

existence of diverse interests and opinions, as weakness since it is so far removed from the military order of command and obedience.

In retrospect, the military regimes under Generals Ayub, Zia and Musharraf show a rather similar pattern. First they set about depoliticising Pakistani society by suspending the constitution and banning political parties under martial law or emergency rule. Then the army chief declares himself President while also retaining the military office. The next step is introducing some form of limited democracy that legitimises military rule through presidential and general elections. As is evident in his autobiography, Ayub Khan took a patronising stance towards the people and practically declared them unfit for democratic rule, thereby also claiming the military's authority to judge the best interest of the country: "Our eventual aim must be to develop democracy in Pakistan, but of a type that suits the genius of the people. Our people are mostly uneducated and our politicians not so scrupulous. The people are capable of doing great things, but they can also be easily misled. [...] We, therefore, have to have a controlled form of democracy with checks and counter-checks."⁶⁵

In 1959, General Ayub nullified the existing political order in Pakistan through the Elective Bodies Disqualification Order that gave former politicians two options: trial for misconduct or voluntary withdrawal from public life. He then set up his "controlled form of democracy", the Basic Democracies system in which selected social and economic groups with local rather than regional or national ambitions were given limited representation in exchange for supporting military rule.⁶⁶ The official objective of the system was, in a sense, education of the masses: "to generate vigour and enthusiasm and liberate those moral and intellectual forces which are essential to the development of a dynamic and dedicated leadership in the country".⁶⁷ Ayub used this system to legitimise his rule in presidential and National Assembly elections, the outcomes of which presented no surprises.

⁶⁵ Khan 1967: 188-9.

⁶⁶ Jalal 1995: 56.

⁶⁷ Khan 1967: 209.

However, much like under Zia's rule two decades later, the absence of national political agendas fuelled ethnic and regional identities as well as general dissatisfaction. During the 1960s discontent was growing with a political system based on exclusion and selective distribution of resources. In 1967 the Pakistan Democratic Movement was formed in order to demand e.g. reintroduction of parliamentarism, direct elections and devolution of powers to the provinces. At the same time the Bengali Awami League called for provincial autonomy for East Pakistan because of the inadequate representation of Bengalis in state institutions and the wide economic disparities between the two wings of Pakistan. The regime responded by criminalising most forms of political activity.⁶⁸

The entire country saw widespread civil unrest during 1968-1969 and the military eventually turned on Ayub, forcing him to resign and appoint the army chief Yahya Khan as President. Given the highly charged atmosphere Yahya was practically compelled to schedule free, party-based general elections for 1970. Before the elections he however made a move to secure the military-bureaucratic establishment's interests by announcing an order which, not completely unlike Zia's Eighth Amendment, gave the President the authority to veto any constitutional document produced by the National Assembly. The crisis following the elections has been accounted for above; when negotiations between the Awami League, Bhutto and Yahya broke down the military ordered a crackdown in East Pakistan on March 25th 1971, which prompted the declaration of an independent Bangladesh the next day. Later in the year, India intervened in the conflict and crushed the Pakistani military completely. With the armed forces humiliated and faced with an aggressively critical popular opinion the "competence principle" could no longer sustain military rule under Yahya, or any other military man, and power was handed to Bhutto.

Under the circumstances, Bhutto had a unique opportunity to tilt the balance of power in favour of the elected institutions and bring the military under civilian control. He restructured the military organisation to disperse power and crafted the 1973 Constitution to prevent future military intervention. On the other hand, developments in Afghanistan as well as India's moves towards nuclear capability meant that a strong military was still

⁶⁸ Jalal 1995: 60.

essential and indeed, defence spending rose by over 200 percent during the 1970s.⁶⁹ It was Bhutto's reliance on the army to maintain law and order that finally re-enacted military involvement in politics; the operation against the uprising in Baluchistan during 1973-77 was particularly significant as it deteriorated to civil war proportions.⁷⁰ Bhutto's personalisation of power eventually generated massive unpopularity, both among the general population and in the military-bureaucratic establishment – the situation, and its outcome, was not unlike Nawaz Sharif's "parliamentary autocracy" two decades later. The instability that followed arguments over the 1977 election results prompted the military to intervene and initiate Pakistan's second period of military rule under General Zia ul-Haq. In an interview in March 1978 the military's role as arbiter of the best interest of the nation and the desired political order is again revealed as Zia declares:

"We don't intend to stay for years [...] All I'm looking for is an environment in which to hold elections, and more than that to see that the results of the elections are positive. Because elections for the sake of elections is not the answer. Elections must bring out a positive result in the form of a somewhat stable political government."⁷¹

⁶⁹ Talbot 2005: 223.

⁷⁰ Tepper, Elliot L.. "The New Pakistan: Problems and Prospects." *Pacific Affairs* 47.1 (1974): 62.

⁷¹ "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto death sentence. Sandy Gall interviews General Zia Ul-Haq", 23.3.1978, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCC7hAsIQrE>. (accessed March 16th, 2010)

6. Conclusions and discussion

One way to conceptualise the political history of Pakistan is through Hamza Alavi's theory of the overdeveloped post-colonial state, which despite its age and overtly Marxist terminology is insightful. Alavi argues that the colonial state was relatively autonomous from society since its purpose was to subordinate all the indigenous social classes, which it did through a military-bureaucratic apparatus. This system, according to Alavi, essentially lived on in the post-colonial age where the military and bureaucracy has continued to play a mediatory role between the propertied classes: the indigenous and metropolitan bourgeoisies and the landowning classes. All these groups have had a common interest in preserving the existing social order and the most powerful challenges to the military-bureaucratic dominance have therefore arisen from underprivileged regions and ethnic groups.¹ Akhtar has applied this theory to the post-1988 situation in Pakistan and argued that the propertied classes represented themselves through the PPP and PML. As discussed in chapter 4, landowners and industrialists seem indeed to have had a great influence in both parties. Despite the differences between these parties they both at least initially consented to a political system dominated by the military, which would partly explain why no significant new paths were explored in Pakistani politics during the 1990s.²

Consequently, it is not meaningful, nor really possible, to classify the political system in Pakistan between 1988 and 1999 as either democratic or authoritarian. For describing the variety of subtypes that exists between these two extremes a great number of terms have been coined, e.g. democratic authoritarianism, semi-democracy, illiberal democracy, electoral democracy etc. Wagner has argued that the minimalist definition of democracy, described in chapter 2 above, encounters problems when applied to a South Asian setting. After 1988, elections in Pakistan were certainly frequent and resulted in a change of government, yet they were neither free nor fair given the highly charged atmosphere they

¹ Alavi, Hamza. "The state in post-colonial societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh." *New Left Review* 74.1 (1972): 59-81.

² Akhtar, Aasim Sajjad. "Pakistan: Crisis of a frontline state." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 40.1 (2010): 108.

took place in. Freedom of press and association existed, though only to an extent, and the situation was also ambiguous what comes to fair competition and equal participation.³ For this reason Wagner has opted to term Pakistan a “fragmented democracy”, defined as a democracy that has established a constitution but where the enforcement of constitutional rights is patchy because of the weakness of political institutions.⁴ According to Wagner, democracy “rests on a concept of state that makes claims for territorial and constitutional unity both in the fields of nation- and state-building”. When ethnic groups challenge this unity and there are no developed institutions through which compromises can be reached, the result is political fragmentation.⁵

The fragmentation is even more evident if the political process in Pakistan after 1988 is studied in terms of the underlying factors that influence democracy enlisted in chapter 2. The circumstances, it must be concluded, were far from ideal for a successful democratic transition. Pakistan has since independence been a multi-ethnic society with strong regional and ethnic inequalities in terms of political representation and economy. The Punjabi-dominated central state’s consistent policy of forcefully suppressing calls for decentralisation contributed to the politicisation of ethnic groups and the breakup of Pakistan in 1971. By 1988 the electorate was in many ways ethnically stratified, with various groups filing nonnegotiable and conflicting demands. The failure of governments to address the ethnic strife in Sindh as a political issue undermined the credibility of the entire political system, while the resolution of the conflict through force helped the military extend its role into politics. In the mid-90s Alan Whaites reported strong signs of an emerging civil society⁶, but it is reasonable to assume that this sector was still too weak to be able to bridge the ethnic cleavages in Pakistani society and that way facilitate the transition process.

³ Wagner, Christian. "Democracy and state in South Asia: Between fragmentation and consolidation?." *Asian Survey* 39.6 (1999): 912-913.

⁴ Ibid.: 918.

⁵ Ibid.: 925.

⁶ Whaites, Alan. "The state and civil society in Pakistan." *Contemporary South Asia* 4.3 (1995): n.p., Internet version via EBSCOhost.com (accessed April 28th, 2010).

As discussed in chapter 4, the political culture in Pakistan has as a rule stressed administration rather than representation and political institutionalisation has also remained on a consistently low level because of the prevalence of military regimes. The autonomy of the party system that emerged in 1988 was compromised from the outset by the Eighth Amendment and the mediatory role this gave the President and by extension the military. The IJI's/PML's close links to the preceding military regime also tilted the party system to the disadvantage of its opponents. Talbot has argued that it was the limitations on the democratic procedure that turned the focus of politics from ideology to patronage and vicious competition between the contending parties.⁷ Competition between the two main parties was so fierce that no respect was given to the other side and consequently, the principle of legitimate opposition was completely set aside. Parliament itself was hardly a functioning democratic institution and parties systematically turned to extra-parliamentary means such as street agitation, strikes, criminal charges, corruption and even extortion, kidnapping, physical abuse and murder. Pakistan's majority voting system was perhaps not problematic *per se* but the two-party system it produced, sometimes ironically described as consisting of the PPP and the anti-PPP, was not conducive to the democratic process since it coincided with a Sindhi-Punjabi ethnic cleavage.⁸

Between 1988 and 1999 Pakistan thus saw four elected governments, none of which were able to complete their term. For the average Pakistani it probably mattered little which party was in charge, since the differences between the PPP and the IJI/PML in terms of policy were minor and they both were largely unable to implement their promises. In terms of economic performance, the governments' efforts were below all standards since the political intrigues effectively turned the attention away from pressing financial issues while general social instability halted socioeconomic development. Military expenditure also remained on a high level throughout the period despite the country's severe economic hardships. This state of affairs certainly did not improve the legitimacy of governments and the political system.

⁷ Talbot, Ian. *Pakistan: A Modern History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005: 290.

⁸ Wilder, Andrew R. "Changing Patterns of Punjab Politics in Pakistan: National Assembly Election Results, 1988 and 1993." *Asian Survey* 35.4 (1995): 392.

The political role of the Pakistani military was arguably the most serious impediment to the democratic transition. Perhaps with the exception of a brief spell during the 1970s, the military's function as the final arbiter in Pakistani politics has been unchallenged since 1947. The military's tradition of deep mistrust of politics and politicians has prompted it to actively work towards depoliticising society and its nominal commitment to representative government has been expressed through various forms of controlled democracy. After 1988 the military exercised its veto power through the Eighth Amendment and informal power-sharing agreements, which limited the *de facto* sovereignty of the representative institutions. That the military did not hesitate to use its monopoly on the means of coercion to protect its position was evident from the 1999 military coup, which was carried out despite widespread international condemnation, in a time when military regimes were increasingly seen as an aberration. Thus it is clear that the military would accept a diminished political influence only through its own initiative. Such initiatives have not been taken during the course of Pakistan's history and considering the volatile security situation in South Asia it seems likely that the military's security doctrine and political role will continue to be obstacles to democracy. The need to handle the military delicately, even in this day, is evident from Bhutto's choice of words when she describes the events after 1988. She never criticises the military-as-institution for undermining her governments, instead she targets individuals such as "the army chief", "General Zia" or uses vague expressions such as "the forces of extremism", "the Zia elements" or "the authoritarians".⁹

It is obvious that the political process in Pakistan after 1988 did not meet the criteria for a completed democratic transition presented in chapter 2 above: governments were not free to generate new policies and they also shared power with the President *de jure* and the military *de facto*. Neither had any agreement been reached regarding old and fundamental institutional questions, such as the choice of either a centralised or a federal state. The scenario, then, was rather more like the electoralist nontransition described by Linz and

⁹ Bhutto, Benazir. *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*. London: Pocket Books, 2008: passim.

Stepan.¹⁰ On the other hand, Schedler has stated that democratic consolidation is an intrinsically teleological concept¹¹ and the same can reasonably be said for democratic transition. One might therefore question whether democracy really was an issue in Pakistan at all during this period. The essentially nondemocratic and personality-driven character of the two main parties and the ruthless intrigue between these suggest that the commitment to democratic values was weak among the political elite; the struggle was for power rather than democratic consolidation, despite the democratic rhetoric of especially the PPP. It is also open to question to what extent the party system and electoral procedure were seen as legitimate by the general public as voter turnout during the period was low from the outset and declined steadily. From 43.1 per cent in 1988 the turnout declined to 35.9 in 1997, which can be seen as an indication of low democratic commitment and serious disillusionment with the entire political process.¹² This reading is supported by the general reaction to the 1999 military coup, a mix of indifference and relief.¹³ Democracy was clearly not “the only game in town”, to use Linz and Stepan’s much-quoted definition of consolidation.¹⁴

¹⁰ Linz, Juan J. and Stepan, Alfred. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996: 4.

¹¹ Schedler, Andreas. "What is democratic consolidation?" *Journal of Democracy* 9.2 (1998): 94.

¹² Bray, John. "Pakistan at 50: A State in Decline?" *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 73.2 (1997): 320.

¹³ Talbot 2005: 378.

¹⁴ Linz and Stepan 1996: 5.

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